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SIX LECTURES
ON
The Book of Genesis
as the Primary Evangel

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BY
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"Quaquam et in vetere Novum (Testamentum) lateat, et in Novo Vetus pateat."—S. AUGUSTINE (*Quæst. in Ex., qu. 73*).

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PREFATORY NOTE

THE object aimed at in these Lectures is to exhibit the Book of Genesis as an inspired spiritual drama in six acts, in which is unfolded before us the varying relations in which man stood to the Almighty during the ages that elapsed between the creation of man and the death of the Patriarch Jacob. This drama, as I have endeavoured to show, is constructed on a method which is uniformly observed through the several acts, and which may be compared with the plan of the Tabernacle of the Israelites—a plan which was not designed by Moses, but given to him by God, and so also was inspired. The Tabernacle consisted of an outer court, into which all the chosen people had access, and an inner sanctuary, into which the priests only could enter. In a similar manner this drama sets before us man's position on earth as God's vicegerent. This is in every

case expressed in plain language to be understood of everyone, and corresponds to the outer court of the Tabernacle. Again, in each act we have man's spiritual position before God portrayed, but not in simple terms, but in language more or less veiled and enigmatical, to be read, not by every one that runneth, but by the devout Israelite only ; and so answereth to the inner sanctuary. This double purpose requires the two accounts of the creation of man, of the Deluge, etc., which are frequently regarded as implying that the Book of Genesis is a compilation by different authors, by which its perfect unity is somewhat marred. I, however, have endeavoured to show that, as the two courts were integral parts of the one Temple, so these double narratives are needed to make the inspired drama complete in both its parts, and so render perfect its unity.

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LECTURE I

THE TEMPORAL AND SPIRITUAL POSITION OF MAN WHEN FIRST CREATED

“The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life ; and man became a living soul.”—GENESIS ii. 7.

YOU will all, I cannot doubt, have had your attention arrested, when reading the opening chapters of the Book of Genesis, by noticing that the Almighty is spoken of in the first chapter as “God,” and only as “God ;” whilst in the second and third He is uniformly styled the “Lord God ;” and, as we proceed, we find that He continues to be spoken of throughout the book after the same manner, that is, either simply as “God,” or as the “Lord God.” My purpose in delivering these lectures is—praying God to open my eyes and yours, that we may see the wondrous things of His law—to show you how the Almighty, in those passages wherein He is styled the “Lord God,” was revealing to His chosen people of old the Gospel of our salvation ; not so openly as it is set before us by the four Evangelists in the New Testament, but in a

mystery. By that I mean, in a way which hid it from the eyes of the world ; so that the world did not stand condemned for not seeing nor hearing ; but which, at the same time, so manifested it to those who walked by faith, that our Lord could say of Abraham, "he rejoiced to see My Day, and he saw it and was glad."

These words of our Lord send us back to the Book of Genesis, stirring in us an ardent desire to learn what and how much of the Gospel had been revealed to our forefathers ; and, as we enter upon this inquiry, we call to mind how the New Testament opens by basing itself on the Old. The New calls upon us to bow the knee to the Son of the Virgin Mother, by setting Him before us as the Son of David and Son of Abraham ; and in that manner builds up our faith in Him on the foundation of what had been revealed concerning Him to Abraham and David. If we neglect this foundation, it is only too probable that we shall but imperfectly realize our Lord's covenanted relations to the whole race of mankind ; and the manner in which all the families of the earth have had secured to them by reiterated pledges their portion in Him, Who should arise out of the line of Abraham to bring life and immortality to light.

Let us, then, turn to the Book of Genesis, and examine after what manner and to what extent the foundations of our faith are laid therein. Always remembering that, if the Gospel according to S. John

is regarded as the most sacred book of the New Testament, the Book of Genesis occupies with that Gospel that exalted position of pre-eminence in sacredness. But for this book man would not know how he had been first formed, nor for what purpose ; he would not know that he was in the image of God, and created an heir of everlasting life. The earlier chapters in Genesis, in revealing to man what manner of being he is, lay the foundations of the vast fabric of human thought which men in successive ages have piled thereon. Those chapters which set forth man's relation to *the earth* on which he lives, and to the living creatures which surround him, lay the foundation of all his actions and occupations in life. Those chapters, again, which teach us what are the relations in which we stand to God, are the foundations on which rest our faith and hope. This wondrous book which, like the Gospels, never grows old, never wearies, which satisfies the simple-minded, and exhausts all the powers of the learned when searching into its mysteries ;—this book which brings out unceasingly to every devout reader in every age things new as well as old ;—this book must never be studied without prayer for illumination, that He Who opened the understanding of the disciples at Emmaus may open our understandings.

Trusting, then, that His grace may illuminate our hearts and minds, let us now proceed to the consideration of what we find therein written. We read through the first chapter, and, as we enter upon the

second, our attention is arrested, as I have previously remarked, by finding that God uses a different style in speaking of Himself in the second chapter to what He did in the first. In the first God invariably speaks of Himself simply as "God;" in the second He is, as invariably, styled the "Lord God."

Now, as every word of God is of inestimable value, and most especially so when He is speaking of Himself, we cannot but pause to inquire what means this change of style, what is it that God would teach us thereby? One insufficient explanation is sometimes proposed—to wit, that Moses compiled the Book of Genesis from ancient manuscripts, extant in his day, or from various oral traditions, and that in one he found the Almighty spoken of as "God," in another as the "Lord God." But, even supposing such were to have been the case, we still undoubtingly believe that Moses was guided by the Holy Spirit in either writing or compiling, so that the question again arises, why did the Holy Spirit influence Moses so to arrange his materials that the Almighty should never be designated the "Lord God" in the first chapter, but be always so styled in the second and third? Throughout the book both forms are used, but we may be sure not indifferently, and I hope to show that wherever God is spoken of as the "Lord God," one and the same distinct purpose guided the choice.

In order, however, to answer this question, I must explain that the English word "Lord," in the form

"the Lord God," is the equivalent of the Hebrew "Jehovah," or the "I Am,"—the "Same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever,"—the Eternal, unchangeable God. When, then, in the record of creation in general, God is spoken of as "God" simply, whilst in the second chapter, which is exclusively devoted to the history of man, we read it was the Eternal "I am," the "Lord God," that created man, do not our hearts at once thrill with the conviction that the Almighty, in creating us, enveloped us, so to speak, in His own Eternity, and assured us thereby that His purpose in creating man can never change, therefore can never fail, and that man must ultimately attain to everlasting life?

Why otherwise did God bring forward not His Almightyness, but His Eternity and unchangeableness? Why are they spoken of in connection with an act of creation, if not to reveal that God has stamped upon that which He then created the impress of His own Eternity? God, it is true, did not create man immortal, but He endowed him with a capacity to attain to immortality, in accordance with the law, which He has impressed upon the material universe. Throughout it we see all life commencing with being united to an undeveloped germ, which, quickened by that life, and nourished by its environment, gradually advances into that form which it possessed from the beginning in the mind of the Creator. That man was created in accordance with that law, we are assured from the Tree of Life being provided on which he

should feed, and, nourished by that food, should gradually develop by growth into the form of a perfect man.

He failed, however, in obeying the law imposed upon him ; and then the Lord God, whose purpose towards man cannot change, restrained man from eating of the Tree of Life. As, had man done so, the Lord God tells us His purpose would have been frustrated ; but, that that purpose should be accomplished, He provided other means by which man should be restored and gradually developed, until he at length attained to the full stature of a righteous man. That new path is marked out in the Book of Genesis, and God directs us along it by going before us as the "Lord God." Thus, *e.g.*, when Noah said, "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem, God shall enlarge Japheth," we understand the pathway of salvation pursues its course through the family of Shem, but does not traverse the inheritance of Japheth.

But at this point two questions may be asked. (1) If the purpose of the Almighty, in being spoken of as the "Lord God," is such as I have described, why does He say to Moses, "I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob by the Name of God Almighty, but by My Name Jehovah was I not known to them?" (2) Why is God not styled the "Lord God," but simply "God," in the first chapter in connection with the creation of man? To the first question we answer thus. Though the style the "Lord God" assured man that the purpose of God

could not change, yet the discipline by which, up to the time of Moses, the Almighty had been educating man, had not taken the form of *restoring that which had fallen* ; hitherto that discipline appeared to be *destructive* in its character ; I say appeared, because its real character cannot be fully understood until the day of judgment. As, *e g.*, in respect of the destruction of the old world, and of Sodom and Gomorrah, we know not, as yet, anything as to the character of the judgment that awaits either of them.

But the Almighty declares to Moses that from that hour, through the future ages, He would prove Himself to be the God, whose purpose cannot change, by constantly *restoring* as well as chastising. Accordingly He delivered the Children of Israel by the hand of Moses out of Egypt ; and, ever after, when they humbled themselves before Him, after rebelling against Him, He forgave their misdeeds, and delivered them out of the hands of their enemies. And, lastly, He instituted through Moses a dispensation of sin offerings and trespass offerings and peace offerings by which His people could be continually reconciled to Him.

My answer to the second question brings before us the, to our eyes, wondrous care with which the Almighty guarded the covenant He had made with man in creating him, in order to exalt him to live an everlasting life in righteousness. As He not only always spoke of Himself, as I am endeavouring to show, as the "Lord God," the unchangeable "I am,"

whenever reference was made to that purpose ; but He further most strictly kept that high and holy purpose distinct and separate from any temporal covenant He might at any time make with man, even though such temporal covenant might be subsidiary to the covenant of everlasting life.

Let us apply this rule to the first chapter, verse 26. We read, "God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness : and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." Upon this I remark : (1) We are not here taught in what respect man is in God's image, beyond that He endowed him with power, that is, with some measure of His own Almightyness, in saying "let him have dominion," etc., and afterwards, in verse 27, giving him a corresponding blessing.

(2) Nothing is said of the relation in which man was to stand to God ; all that is spoken has regard to the *position man was to occupy in respect of the earth*, and everything upon it. He was endowed with dominion ; he entered at once upon a great inheritance, but an *earthly* one ; he was to be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth ; but there the *blessing stopped*. No word is spoken which even indirectly refers to any higher inheritance, therefore God is not styled the "Lord God."

Doubtless, as we shall see anon, this earthly inheritance was given to man, as a sphere in which

he might be exercised, and grow, until fitted to enter on the full possession of the spiritual inheritance prepared for him. As, afterwards, Canaan was given to the Children of Israel for a possession, that in it the sacred line of the Redeemer might be cradled, and also nourished by the trials and sufferings in which it shared, until the fulness of time arrived for the birth of the Virgin's Son. But, in both cases, and indeed in all other cases in the Book of Genesis, the spiritual and temporal covenants and blessings are kept carefully separate; the temporal, moreover, always preceding the spiritual.

We will now pass on for a time to the second chapter, which markedly contrasts with the first in that its subject-matter is man, and man's relation to his Maker and that only. In the former chapter God had said, "Let us make man in our Image;" but, as I have pointed out, did not announce in what that Image consisted. He now, in the second chapter, unfolds His purpose, by revealing Himself as the "Lord God," the Eternal "I Am," the "Same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever;" and I cannot but feel that there is but one conclusion to be drawn therefrom, and that is, that by so speaking of Himself, and in breathing into man's nostrils the breath of life, God *impressed the Image of His own unchangeableness on man*, by bestowing on him an inheritance of everlasting life.

It is true that in the first chapter the entire animal creation is spoken of as having "living souls,"

as well as man in the passage now under consideration; but the environment is different. In their case, God is not said to have "breathed into their nostrils," nor does He speak of Himself as the "Lord God."

Isaac Williams, in his "Notes on the Book of Genesis," p. 230, observes, "The inbreathing of God must have been with the infusion of spiritual grace, for he (man) was created in order to a Divine Life, and such a life could not be sustained without the co-operation of the grace of God. Add to which, the statement that the Lord God had breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, so expressly declared of man, seems to indicate some peculiar excellence in that gift—and above the life of other creatures, which is indeed of God, but not in this pre-eminent sense." He also remarks that S. Chrysostom and the Fathers generally understand the expression "a living soul" in a higher sense when spoken of man, than when spoken of the animal creation.

But it seems to me that they would have very greatly strengthened their argument, had they in addition dwelt upon the fact that it was the Eternal Lord God—the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever—Who breathed into man's nostrils; Whose breathing therefore would never fail, but continually quicken to everlasting life. On the other hand, no such pledge is given to the animal creation, through the Name by which the Almighty is designated in the narrative of their creation.

Having thus learned how the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the earth, we are next told "that the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden," and "there He put the man whom He had formed." Then follows a description both of the beauty and plenteousness of the garden;—but for what purpose is this description given? Is it not intended to show that man came forth from the Hands of his Creator, a *moral being*; and in this way, as well as in being an heir of everlasting life, in the Image and likeness of God?

For is not man here set before us as a being, whose perfection consists in exercising self-control, and accepting limits. The fish of the sea, the birds of the air, roamed at will through the ocean and the air; the beasts of the field grazed upon the mountains unrestrained; and this unrestrained life showed that they were far removed from the likeness of God; for the Mind of God was to create all things *in order and measure and weight*. But now a new being stands upon the earth, like unto God, endowed with a moral sense, which responds to the Mind of God by accepting limitations in all things, and regulating his life in order and measure and weight; setting bounds to his passions and feelings and desires. The garden had its limits, and man, though lord of the whole earth, was not to be a wanderer, but to have a settled home; the fruits of the field were given to him for food, but there was to be a limit to his appetite; one he was not to touch.

The description of the Garden of Eden, whether it be history or allegory, has its place in this chapter to show us that man, when created by the Lord God, was endowed with a moral sense, was constituted a being capable of self-control, and who in his relations to the outer world was to exercise self-restraint. And what, as such, was his relation to God? The "Lord God commanded him, saying, Of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Thus that fear of God, which is the beginning of wisdom, was implanted in him from the first; thus was he in the Image of God, in that he was the absolute master of his own life, to preserve it by obedience, though alas! he could also forfeit it by sinning. Lastly, he could say "he heard the words of God, and saw the vision of the Almighty having his eyes open;" for, when the Lord God said he should fall under the dominion of death *in the day* that he sinned, man realized that every day and every hour he was in the presence of God, that God was with him, and that nothing was hidden from His Knowledge.

Thus far, Adam is set before us in this chapter as a grand figure; for at all times we recognize the dignity which belongs to perfect self-mastery, and account it to be godlike. At this point, however, it may be very naturally asked what was the extent of the intellectual knowledge possessed by Adam, and what was the measure of moral strength bestowed upon him?

To the first question I reply, the Book of God supplies no answer. God, having endowed man with reason, ever respects His own gift, and does not at any time supersede it, by making known by revelation ought to the knowledge of which man can attain by study and research, even though thousands of ages roll by before that knowledge has been reached.

It is different, however, with the second case. Neither science nor moral introspection can tell us what was man's moral strength in the beginning. We cannot place ourselves in the position of Adam before he fell, so cannot speak with assured confidence in regard to the measure of the grace of God, which dwelt within him, whilst he remained a righteous being.

So much, however, I think we shall find revealed, in what is written of the naming of the animals, as will satisfy us that man was not morally unprotected, but was armed with a defensive weapon, sufficient to protect him. In the 19th and 20th verses we are told that "the Lord God brought every beast of the field and every fowl of the air to Adam to see what he would name them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof." I will not stay to inquire whether this is literal history or an allegory; what we are in search of is the lesson the Holy Spirit would teach us from this passage. Does it reveal that Adam had a highly cultivated intellect, so filled with learning that in his presence

Solomon would have been but a child? I think not. We must remember that, besides the knowledge acquired by study and experience through the exercise of our intellectual faculties, man is endowed with that priceless knowledge, commonly called intuition, by which the eye of the soul, when illumined by the light of God shining upon it, has immediate perception of a moral character.

As intellectual beings our first parents may or may not have been as ignorant as babes; but their moral perception, as sinless beings illumined by the Holy Spirit, would have been unclouded;—as with us, whilst a little child, with its intellect undeveloped, cannot comprehend the construction of the simplest toy it plays with, but can, on the other hand, intuitively apprehend spiritual truths, so that when we say to it God is everywhere—that the darkness with God is as clear as the light, that God can read its inmost thought—its eye does not indicate that its mind is confused, but its expression is that of eager attention, consequent upon intuitive apprehension; or, again, how clear and certain is *the intuitive knowledge of character* manifested by the youngest of children.

It was this intuitive knowledge of character which, I conceive, we are to understand enabled Adam to name every living creature as it passed before him. No cloud of sin shut out the Light of God from his soul, so that, though intellectually without knowledge, ignorant of anatomy, and every branch of zoological

science, his soul, full of light, could intuitively discern the Mind of God in all His works, and appropriately name everything in agreement with the purpose of God in creating it. *Endowed with this moral faculty of intuitive perception of character*, our first parents could have at once seen into that of their tempter, had their eyes not been withdrawn to admire the outward beauty of the deadly fruit.

We have next recorded the building up of woman out of man, and the institution of marriage. This passage reveals how wondrously man was formed in the Image of God. As the man being the fountain of mankind, the woman being of the man alone, and the child being of the man and the woman, constitute man a being in the Image of the Ever Blessed Trinity more perfectly than any other created being, so far as revelation has made known to us.

The chapter concludes with the statement, "that they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed." I have a few remarks to make on this passage. "They were both naked," that is, they did not then wear clothing. But it is contrary to nature for anything that has life not to be clothed. Every bird has its plumage, every animal its coat; the bird rejoices in its plumage, and the animal in its coat;—each is conscious that its covering is a glory to it, and invests it with beauty. Further, no beauty remains, though the form is unchanged, when the feathers are plucked, or the

coat removed ; we cease even to admire the form, when divested of its covering.

I conceive, therefore, that artists are altogether at fault when they paint the human form unclothed ; pleading, in justification, that as Adam and Eve were not ashamed, there can be no offence against purity in so painting them. I consider they entirely fail to understand this passage. Could the animals, splendid in their covering coats, bow down to and submit themselves to Adam and Eve, whilst unclothed, as beings standing among them in the likeness of God ? To have done so would have required them to do violence to nature.

What then is the explanation ? We have not, methinks, far to go in our search for it. In Exodus xxxiv. we read : "When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, and Aaron and all the Children of Israel saw Moses, behold the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come nigh." Again we are told of our Lord, when He was transfigured on the Mount, "His Face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light." Further, S. John, when describing the appearance of our Lord in Glory, tells us, "the brightness of His Countenance was as the Sun shineth in its strength" (Rev. i.). Have we not ourselves also seen the faces of the meek and lowly saints of God illumined at times with a pure and heavenly light ? From all this, we may learn what we have to supply, when we read in Genesis that Adam and Eve were naked and were not ashamed. Why not ?

Because the Light of the Spirit of God, which dwelt within them, shone through their bodies, and surrounded them with a light so pure, so bright, that, as in the case of the Israelites in regard to Moses, the animal creation was afraid to come nigh them. That light was their glorious covering, and all creation bowed down before them as they approached, beholding in them the Image and likeness of the Lord God Almighty, glorious in brightness.

This lecture will not be complete, unless I conclude with briefly pointing out how the grant to man, of which we read in the first chapter, of lordship over the earth is subsidiary to the development of man as a moral being, as he is set before us in the second chapter.

When we read that God made man His vicegerent on the earth, we ask for what end in regard to man himself? In what will it result, if he proves himself a faithful steward? We find him simply put in possession, and blessed, but nothing is said of wages, nor of the consequences which would follow upon unfaithfulness. But if we take our stand upon the second chapter, then we at once perceive for what end this task was assigned to him, we see how man's earthly position is subsidiary to his spiritual.

Man, as he entered upon his office, found himself a being in the Image of God, and also a member of the vertebrate order of animal life, sharing in its main features a common organization with the other members of that order. He would consequently be

drawn both Godwards and towards animal life by that law of sympathy which attaches us to that which we resemble. At every turn, at every moment, ethical questions, arising out of this double attraction, would present themselves to him. What was his duty? What restraint should he put upon his feelings? What freedom should he allow to them? His office became at once a school of ethical discipline, in which he was to be trained to attain to the stature of a perfect righteous man, according as it was afterwards said of our Lord, "He learned obedience by the things which He suffered," notwithstanding that in Him was no sin. Thus the earthly inheritance of the first chapter was not an end in itself, but subsidiary to that moral and spiritual inheritance of which we read in the second.

Further, whilst it has been sufficiently proved, especially of late years, that in the first chapter of Genesis God has strictly respected the gift of intellect He had bestowed upon man, and has revealed nothing in regard to the constitution of the material universe, but has left it to man by study and research to discover how the stars are held in their courses, and the several laws which regulate all the operations of nature, yet that chapter is full of ethical instruction to assist man in the education and development of his moral faculties.

For example, we learn there that the creation of the world was not an instantaneous act, but that the

Almighty worked with deliberation, thereby condemning the character that acts on impulse, without forethought or perseverance. Again we read the evening and the morning were the day. There was the evening with its twilight and refreshing breezes ; there was the darkness of the night ; the light of the early morn, the heat of the noonday. By this figurative representation we learn that each work was executed in the midst of very varying conditions ; one part may have needed, speaking figuratively, to have been wrought in heat, another in cold ; the entire work would consequently have demanded thought in planning, care in laying it out, skilful adjustment of its parts, and, it may be, patience in overcoming obstacles. And as man meditated thereon, he would learn to eschew haste, impatience, unmethodical habits. He would evolve from such contemplation a code of ethics for the Godlike ordering of his daily life.

At this point I will stop for the present, as we have come to the end of the second chapter. We have learned how man was created, and how he was endowed with a double blessing—(1) lordship over the earth and all that is on it was granted to him ; and (2) an inheritance of everlasting life secured to him. We have also seen that that lordship was not an end in itself, but was subsidiary to the greater blessing, supplying man with a field and an occupation, wherein and by which he might be trained to lead that righteous life which should fit him to enter

into possession of his promised inheritance of everlasting life. We have also seen that the gift of the temporal lordship is recorded before that of the spiritual blessing; and lastly, whilst the former is delivered in words simple and clear, the latter is conveyed in veiled and mystical language.

And in conclusion I will ask you to give special attention to the construction of these chapters. We shall find the same order invariably observed in Genesis in the record of God's dealings with man at each epoch of his history, and we shall see that we have always, as in the present case—

1. Two blessings bestowed on man, one temporal or earthly, the other spiritual.

2. The temporal blessing, as in this, so in every other case, is spoken of before the spiritual.

If you inquire, why is this order observed? we answer we cannot doubt but that the Almighty has a purpose in establishing this order, even if that purpose is not fully made manifest. But even if it is not clearly revealed, we must recognize that it is in consonance with God's unchangeable Being, and with the unvarying laws which He has impressed upon the universe to maintain it in order, that the relations between the two blessings should be fixed and be invariable. It wears the appearance as if the Almighty willed first to prepare a home in which the spiritual gift should dwell, a field in which it should be exercised and grow and develop until it arrives at maturity. Note, also, we read in Genesis ii.,

God first formed man's body, made ready the home, and then infused into it his soul.

3. In relation to the temporal blessing, the Almighty is spoken of as God only, but as the Lord God when the spiritual blessing is given, thus impressing upon it, as I have explained, the stamp of Eternity. The earthly blessing being not so marked, intellectual man is free to pursue his scientific investigations into the constitution of the universe, and by searching to find out the duration of time.

4. The temporal blessing is ever bestowed in plain terms, so that he who runs may read, whilst it is the opposite with the spiritual gift, that is delivered in veiled language, or by allegory, or by symbols, thus assuring us that God is at such times addressing Himself to man's moral sense rather than to his intellectual.

It is an error into which many are too prone to fall, to suppose that man's moral perceptions are of the same order as his intellectual—the intellect can minister to man's moral sense, as a support, but not as a foundation on which to build. S. Paul earnestly seeks to impress this upon us, by saying that spiritual things can only be spiritually discerned ; accordingly by being everywhere in Genesis mystically and enigmatically delivered, the spiritual promises are clearly seen not to be addressed to the intellect after the same manner as are the temporal promises.

LECTURE II

*THE TEMPORAL AND SPIRITUAL POSITION OF MAN
AS ORDERED BY THE WORD OF THE LORD ON
THE FALL OF ADAM*

"And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day : and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden."—GENESIS iii. 8.

IN my previous lecture I endeavoured to show (1) that when the Almighty spoke of Himself as the "Lord God," and in that way especially put before us the unchangeableness of His Being, He intended thereby to assure us that His purpose, whatever it might be, could not fail, but would in His own appointed time be surely accomplished. (2) That, when the Almighty styles Himself "God" only, He gives us no such pledge ; therefore, what He then does or promises is not an integral part of His scheme by which He effects the salvation of men. In most cases, however, it will be found to be subsidiary to such scheme, in being an earthly provision for training man for his spiritual inheritance.

I then gathered from the second chapter that the Lord God—

(a) In creating man, breathed into him the germ of everlasting life, and

(b) Assured him, by styling Himself the “Lord God,” that His purpose concerning him could not fail.

(c) That He endowed man with a moral sense, and placed him in the Garden of Eden, where he could exercise himself in self-control.

(d) That He further armed him with the shield of discernment of character, to protect him from the attacks of evil.

(e) Lastly, as told in Chapter I., He made him lord of the earth, that he might learn to know God by the study of His works ; and, by ruling in accordance with what he so learned, he might go on to develop in himself the Image of God after which he had been created.

To-day, alas ! we pass on to consider the record of man’s fall, and of his passing under the dominion of sin, being made subject to death by the righteous judgment of the Almighty. Nevertheless, the third chapter, whilst it tells us of man’s disobedience, publishes at the same time the Gospel of our Salvation ; so that, although from that hour man has been born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upwards, he can yet go forward, the confidence of hope sustaining his steps.

Let us then listen to the Gospel, as it is here first

preached to us. The chapter begins, "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made." Note what is written carefully. In the first chapter, in which we have the record of creation, which includes within it the creation of the serpent, God spake of Himself simply as "God." But, now, when the serpent had prevailed over man, and sentence was about to be pronounced upon Adam, God changes His style, and speaks of Himself, in connection with the creation of the serpent, as the "Lord God," as He Who through all Eternity cannot change, and whose purpose therefore must triumph over all obstacles, and be ultimately accomplished. This change of style was therefore manifestly made for man's consolation. The extreme subtlety of the serpent is fully admitted; but, however great that subtlety, it could not enable the serpent to prevail against its Creator. When, therefore, the Creator is spoken of as the Lord God, Who had pledged Himself to man, in creating him, to bestow on him everlasting life, the heart of Adam would be encouraged to trust that that purpose would not be frustrated by the serpent's subtlety, but would yet be accomplished. Thus was the Gospel preached, before the court was opened; and man, ere he was brought up for judgment, was assured that he had not forfeited for ever the spiritual inheritance which had been bestowed on him, when created in the image of Him Who is Eternal.

It is instructive to notice that, whilst the Almighty

in His love and in His compassion styles Himself the "Lord God," the serpent cunningly avoided speaking of God as the unchangeable "I Am." He would not thereby assist Eve to make answer, if the Lord God has prohibited us from eating, it is impossible for Him to change.

Adam and Eve ate of the fruit ; their eyes were attracted by its beauty, so they did not use that faculty to discern the character of the serpent, which had enabled Adam to discern the nature of each animal as it passed before him, and to name it accordingly. They ate ; and as they ate, the Holy Spirit of righteousness, which had been to them a covering of light, withdrew, and they saw and felt that they were naked. I do not say that the Holy Spirit altogether withdrew *His Presence*, as we shall see as we proceed that the Lord God continued to suffer fallen man to have some measure of intercourse and communion with Himself. The light continued to shine, but in the midst of much darkness. Nevertheless the Lord God, Who is Light, is shown as remaining so with man ; that this chapter fully sustains the teaching of S. John—that the true light has been a light to lighten every one that from the first has come into the world. To return, however, to the history, as it is told us. The day wore away, and in the cool of the evening—note the time—the Almighty had placed man in the beautiful garden to dress it and to keep it ;—mindful, therefore, of the charge He had given to man, He did not

tempt him to neglect his duty, but waited until the cool of the evening—waited for the hour of rest ; then Adam, with Eve, heard the Voice of the Lord God calling to them, and in their shame at being naked, they crouched among the trees to hide themselves.

What followed must be divided into three parts, and in that way considered. We have—

1. An introduction of Mercy ; man is not brought up for judgment until the mercy of God has surrounded him, and so strengthened his and his descendants' spirit, that with bowed head he and they may submissively hear the sentence pronounced.

2. The sentence itself ;—delivered separately on the serpent, on Eve and on Adam, in each case in terms most plain, with no word to mitigate its severity, or to veil or render doubtful its meaning. It is thus plain because it has regard to man's position on earth.

3. Statements and language from which we can infer the relations in which man should in the future stand towards God ;—symbols, imagery, and enigmatical language are used which serve to show to us how imperfect, compared with what we now enjoy, was the intercourse in that hour of the soul of man with his Creator. Few, relatively, were the rays of light which at first penetrated through the darkness that had set in, though they were gradually and slowly to increase in strength, until at last S. John could say, "The life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness and show unto you that eternal life."

1. Consider the environment of mercy which

surrounded the judgment-seat of the Almighty. (a) I have already pointed out how the serpent, being spoken of at this juncture as the creation of the Lord God, not of God simply, but of Him in Whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning, was a token to man that the serpent's subtlety, however great, was insufficient to frustrate the will of the Eternal I am,—the Same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. (b) We further find that God did not in His anger send His servants to destroy those wicked husbandmen. Not so; He remembered He had bound Himself to them by a covenant of everlasting life in the act and by the manner of creating them. (c) He did not send an angel to pronounce sentence upon man, refusing to admit him into His Presence. Again not so; God, Who is essentially love, Whose love therefore changes not, still loved the man, on whom He had impressed His own Image, and Himself sought out our first parents, not as the Almighty, terrible in His anger, but as the Lord God, Who was still mindful of His unchangeable purpose towards him.

“They heard,” we read, “the Voice of the Lord God,” and surely that Voice was the Voice of the Gospel. It was the Voice of Christ, saying, “Come unto Me, for My purpose changes not.” That Voice then calling to them was an assurance to our first parents that, although the gate of the earthly Paradise was about to be closed against them, admission to the Presence of the Almighty would still be

vouchsafed. That Voice assured them that, though fallen from righteousness, the Lord God, in His unchangeable love, would still suffer man to dwell in His Presence ; privileging him, as the ages rolled by, to draw nigher and nigher to Him, until at length that Voice, become Incarnate, proclaimed to all that believed in Him, "If a man love Me, My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him."

2 We proceed now to the sentences. I remarked in my previous lecture that, throughout the Book of Genesis, man's spiritual inheritance and his earthly are invariably kept distinct, being always spoken of separately ;—the earthly inheritance being uniformly the first to be dealt with, then the spiritual. Further, in speaking of man's position on earth, the language of the Almighty is always clear and plain ; whilst in respect of the spiritual inheritance, He clothes His words in symbols, and figures, and dark sayings. We shall find this order observed in the judgment. Every word is clear, in no wise enigmatical, and *has regard to man's place on earth*. God had said, "Be fruitful and multiply," and now He says, He will greatly multiply the woman's sorrow in conception ; He had given man authority to subdue the earth, and now He sentences him to do so with hard labour, his toil being enhanced by the earth henceforth bringing forth thorns and thistles.

The judgment is *all of the earth* ; it concludes with saying, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou

return ;" and then we listen with anxious ear to hear the spiritual sentence, but the Lord God is silent. He had said of man's body, that it was dust, but concerning that living soul, which He had inbreathed into him, He is silent. He had spoken of man's future relations to the earth, but with regard to man's relations henceforth to Himself, the Lord God is silent.

What is it we learn from this dread silence? It throws us back to consider the previous silence of Adam. When the Lord God called to him in the garden, he excused his flight by pleading that he was naked ; but he did *not* say, *I fled because I have sinned*.

The light of the Spirit had gone from him, and he would seem to have had no conscience of sin. We know that, even in these days, sin oftentimes, ay, too frequently, so wounds the soul as to destroy in it the sense of sin ; and the heathen, even the most enlightened of the heathen races, have been and are destitute of that sense. The heathen can feel remorse, that is, they can reproach themselves for the temporal ruin they have brought upon themselves, but not be sorrow-stricken, because they have offended the holiness of the Almighty, for they have no knowledge of that holiness. Cain bitterly felt the greatness of his punishment, but we do not read that one sigh was drawn from him by the remembrance of his crime. David was the first to say "I have sinned," and the Lord God at once replied, "I have put away thy sin, thou shalt not die" But in this case, no penitent word

came from the lips of Adam, and therefore there came from the Lord God no word of remission. He did not hasten to say, "I have put away thy sin," but pronounced sentence of death.

Many ages had to roll by before man could say, "I have sinned." Noah was a preacher of righteousness, but not of repentance; Abraham did not ask that one should be sent to Sodom to call the cities to repentance. It was David who first unlocked the soul, and taught it to empty itself in confession of sin. He was able to say, "Mine unrighteousness have I not hid, and so Thou forgavest the wickedness of my sin."¹

3. Now let us proceed to my third division, that is, to the consideration of the relations which God established with man, after sentence had been pronounced upon him.

(a) We have already seen that Adam did not, as Cain, go out from the Presence of the Lord, after judgment had been delivered. What, then, do we infer from the silence of the Almighty? He had said of man's body that it should return to dust, but as nothing is said corresponding to that in regard to the soul, we conclude that it was left untouched in respect of its nature, and that the sentence on the

¹ Before the times of David, repentance was as a plant, slowly growing in the soul of the Israelite, fed by the discipline with which God was training him. It took the form of crying for deliverance from suffering, until David was broken in heart, not on account of his punishment, but because he had lost the favour of God, and in the anguish of his soul exclaimed, "Against Thee only have I sinned."

soul was that which was already in operation in the loss of the indwelling Presence of the Spirit, Who is Light. That departure had left the soul in darkness, except for the measure of light which came to it from without from the Lord God, Who remained not far off, but nigh.

He Whose purpose could not fail, continued with man, who therefore remained an heir of everlasting life.

(b) Adam had heard the words of the Lord God to the serpent, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." This declaration of the Almighty, though His opening words to the serpent are characterized by that plainness and clearness which mark His utterances, when speaking of the things of the earth, takes now the enigmatical form which attaches to declarations in regard to man's spiritual status.

The rule, which I have previously enunciated, is therefore fully observed in the judgment upon the serpent, as the sentence is in its first part, of the earth, in the second part, spiritual. In these words, thus spoken, the Lord God by degrees enabled man to see foretold a struggle of righteousness with sin, in which the seed of the woman should conquer. That Adam, if not at the moment, yet by degrees, saw as much we conclude from the different families of mankind, scattered over the earth, having carried with them, as shown in their respective mythologies,

a tradition that the Sun of righteousness would overcome the serpent of evil.

Man had, therefore, in these words, spoken to the serpent, but not to himself, strong ground for hope that by means of one of his own offspring he should be restored to righteousness. At the same time he had to realize the great displeasure of the Lord God, by all that was of mercy having to be learned inferentially either from the surrounding conditions, or from words addressed to another ; no word of comfort was spoken to him directly.

(c) Again, the Lord God said unto the serpent, "upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life," but man was allowed to retain his erect position. He had fallen from righteousness ;—but can we not see in this difference between the sentences pronounced upon him and upon the serpent, an earnest that man should yet recover his lost righteousness ;—that the gates of righteousness should yet be opened before him, and that he should enter in, walking in his uprightness. Remember, spiritual promises are not made in plain language, but have to be inferred from symbol and enigma.

(d) But the Gospel, as preached in this chapter, is not yet ended. We read that after sentence had been passed, "unto Adam and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins and clothed them." Our first parents had themselves *sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons*. But the Lord

God rejected this covering, and substituted for it one acceptable to Himself; and of His own making, which is described as a *coat of skins*. Those skins, I cannot doubt, were the skins of the animals offered in sacrifice, foreshadowing the great Gospel announcement, that man will hereafter cease to be found naked, being clothed upon by the Body of Christ, the one true and perfect sacrifice.

It is often remarked that Holy Scripture is silent in regard to the institution of sacrifice, and that consequently we cannot speak with certainty as to whether the service of sacrifice originated with man or with God. I cannot, however, doubt. Fallen man would not have originated a service of dedication of himself to God, by means of whole burnt-offerings, the smoke of which went up to heaven, prefiguring the exaltation of man from earth to heaven. Moreover, all mankind everywhere and in every age worship with sacrifice; and that which is thus common to man, is not of man, but of God. For sin has broken the unity of the human race; it is now divided against itself, and can now of itself be only the parent of division, not of unity. It is God only that maketh men to be of one mind in a house or in the world. How marvellously, then, is the Gospel of our salvation preached, when we read *the Lord God made coats of skin* for our first parents *and clothed them*.

Our Lord gave Himself to be a sacrifice for sin; and we are accepted in the beloved, being clothed upon with Christ. And here in the beginning, coats

are made for Adam and Eve of the skins of the animals offered in sacrifice ; and it is added, "God clothed them," but they were therefore *no longer naked in His sight*, but clothed upon, and thereby fitted to come into His Presence ; as man, though unrighteous, has done from that hour to this.

I must, however, add a few more words on this head. God rejected the apron of fig-leaves, which were the work of Adam and Eve, thereby teaching that fallen man could not by his own works make himself holy in the sight of God. It is interesting to examine all Holy Scripture, and see how throughout the Bible fig-leaves or linen are taken to represent human works. Aaron, the High Priest, representing Christ, wore garments of linen, for our Lord is holy, and all His works are righteous ;—no sacrifice could be offered for Him Who is the one sacrifice for all ; therefore no coat of skin, no woollen garments, could be woven for Him, and Aaron was consequently clothed in linen. Again, when, immediately before His Death, our Lord went to the fig tree, covered with leaves, to see if haply He might find fruit thereon, and finding none, He said, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever," He signified that, though many had wrought righteousness (Hebrews xi. 33), yet that righteousness, whilst evidencing life, was not perfect fruit, but only green leaves ; no perfect fruit had been, or could be borne ; so our Lord bade us turn from the fig tree to the true vine, and, grafted into it, to bring forth fruit.

(c) Lastly, this chapter speaks of the Garden of

Eden as continuing to exist, and within sight of our first parents. Man had not as yet wandered so far from God as to have lost all recollection of it; and Adam and Eve and their posterity, seeing the entrance guarded by the Cherubim, would indulge the hope that the gates were only closed for a season; and that they might yet return to the abode of peace and righteousness. It is in that hope we all continue to live.

To sum up; this chapter, which speaks to us of sin and of judgments, at the same time carries us forward, until it shows us the Gospel of our salvation, if not in the fulness in which it is revealed in the New Testament, yet in such a form as that those who received it could, like Noah, live so as to find favour with God and be pronounced by Him to be just.

For in this chapter we learn that after the fall and after judgment had been pronounced—

1. The Lord God retained man in communion with Himself.

2. By continuing to style Himself the Lord God in His intercourse with man, He assured him that he remained an inheritor of everlasting life.

3. Man, through the last words spoken to the serpent, was called upon to look forward to the coming of a Redeemer, who should spring from his loins, and overcome through suffering.

4. Man, by being permitted to retain his upright position, in contrast to the sentence on the serpent,

was led to hope that he could still in some measure, and in some degree, attain to be counted righteous in the sight of God.

5. Man, through being clothed upon by God, was taught that he was no longer naked in His sight, but could draw nigh to Him, and dedicate himself again and again to the service of his Creator.

6. Through the Garden of Eden being preserved, and guarded by the Cherubim, man was encouraged to look forward to a time when sighing and sorrow should be no more, and his inheritance of everlasting life would be an inheritance of peace and joy and happiness.

7. Through the sentence condemning man to return to dust, being surrounded by all these tokens of mercy, which witnessed to man continuing to be an heir of everlasting life, some expectation of the resurrection of the dead would have been awakened in the breast of man, even if it were too embryonic to take a definite shape. It had, however, in the days of David, become sufficiently defined to enable him to say in regard to his child, "I shall go to him." A light—though very feeble compared to the strength with which it now shines—was in David's time dimly lighting up the grave; and I consider we may infer that a spark of light from the Spirit of Light relieved the dire darkness of death at the very hour that sentence was pronounced upon man, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

We will proceed now to the examination of the

following chapter—the fourth. Eve, we are told, bore Cain, and in saying, “I have gotten a man from the Lord,” showed that she looked upon him as the seed of the woman which should bruise the serpent’s head, according to the word of the Lord God. Contrast her exclamation of joy and hope on the birth of Cain with her silence when Abel was afterwards born. He was born in fulfilment of the earthly blessing to be fruitful and multiply, with which sorrow by the judgment of God was henceforth to be associated, and Eve was silent. It is quite possible that Abel from his birth was not looked upon as being on a level with Cain, and, if not, Cain’s anger would know no bounds when his inferior brother’s offering was accepted and his rejected.

Mark it carefully, they did not sacrifice to God simply as God, or to the Most High God, as Melchizedek designated the Almighty, but to the “Lord God,” that is, not to God solely as the Creator, whose vicegerent man was, but as, besides, the Lord Who had made a covenant of everlasting life with man. Cain is summoned before the “Lord,” and we are told in verse 16, *went out from the Presence of the Lord*; he was excommunicated, and cut off from a share in the covenant which the Lord God had made with man, as is shown in chap. v., which contains “the book of the generations of Adam,” but in which no mention is made of Cain or his posterity; it is as if he had never been.

We have, however, a table of the descendants of

Cain in verses 17, 18 ; but there is nothing to connect them at any stage with the line of Adam to which belonged the covenant. We ask, therefore, why is this table inserted ? I answer possibly for two reasons ; of one we may speak positively, of the other only conjecturally. But we must remember God does not speak openly in Genesis, as in the New Testament ; in Genesis we have the truth, as it were, in the form of a germ, concealed within a case, until the time should come for it to germinate.

The first reason I would give is, that, although Cain and his descendants are cut off from Adam and the covenant of promise through the excommunication of Cain, when he went out from the Presence of the Lord ; nevertheless, as the Table of his descendants, with their names, has a place given to it in the Book of God, we learn they are still before the Almighty. But, whilst it cannot be said that their names are no more in remembrance before God, yet *His purpose in regard to them is not revealed*. Consequently, we cannot pronounce on their ultimate state, nor on that of any, who in the long ages have at different times with them gone out from God ;—we can only observe that silence which our Lord ever maintained. We can neither speak positively nor negatively.

My second reason is of a different character. The Table we find ends with a woman, as it concludes thus in verse 22, “and the sister of Tubal Cain was Naamah.” This is singular, as genealogies in the Bible are ordinarily reckoned through men. If women

are named, it is as wives ; but Naamah is not spoken of as a wife. In the genealogical table given by S. Luke, the Virgin Mother's name does not appear. S. Matthew traces Joseph's descent from Abraham, but not that of the Virgin Mary, and then adds of him, "Who was the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, Who is called Christ."

Who, then, is Naamah ? Her name, we are told, signifies beautiful, or fair—one of a sweet aspect. Why, then, is she named ?—certainly not without a purpose. We know, especially from the teaching of S. John, that Satan unceasingly labours to destroy man by copying the means which God has provided to bring about man's salvation. Christ is ever opposed by Antichrist. And may it not be that, when Satan heard the Lord God speaking of the seed of the woman who shall bruise his head, and afterwards caught glimpses, so to speak, of the preparation that was being made for the birth of her, who was meek and lowly in heart, by the disciplinary training of a long line of ancestors, he, with the power he possessed as Prince of the power of the air, prepared in the line of Cain a woman fair and beautiful, and sweet in aspect, for the destruction of man ? thus assuming, as I think we shall find Adam and Eve continued to do, for a season, that man's Redeemer would still come through Cain, the firstborn of Adam. But as, again and again, sudden destruction has awaited his efforts, so in this case the flood came and swept them all away. But Naamah, we may, I think,

reasonably conjecture, is mentioned to show how defiantly, and with what artful wisdom, and with what subtlety, Satan has resisted the Almighty from the beginning, and with what wiles he has laboured to defeat the sure mercies of God.

The history of the race of Cain ends with the mention of Naamah, and Holy Scripture then reverts to the birth of Seth, who succeeded to the spiritual inheritance forfeited by Cain. In the 25th verse of chap iv. we read that Eve bare a son and called his name Seth, "For God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel." Note her words, she receives the child from "God," the Giver of the earthly blessing to increase and multiply, and not from the "Lord God," Who had promised redemption, as she had done in the case of Cain; and by adding that the child was given her to replace Abel, showed unmistakably in what light she regarded him.

What, then, was the attitude of Adam and Eve towards the spiritual blessing, bestowed in the sentence on the serpent, of the seed of the woman who should bruise the serpent's head? Did they still look for the restoration of Cain to the favour of the Lord God, and trust that he would still prove to be the expected "man from the Lord?" Or, if not that, at least that the vanquisher of Satan would spring from his loins? It was perhaps natural that they should do so. Or did they fear that the covenant of redemption was dissolved by the deed of Cain? Or were they harassed by perplexing doubts? We

cannot answer these questions positively ; but that which we read in the verse following throws a strong light upon their attitude, and shows that for a long time it was at least one of great doubt.

The verse runs thus : " And to Seth, to him also there was born a son ; and he called his name Enos ; then began men to call upon the name of the Lord." We are here told that when Seth had arrived at man's estate, and had established his own house, and a son was born to him, then began men to call upon the Name of the Lord. What is the explanation of this ? Cain and Abel both brought their offerings to the Lord. Why, then, is it said here that men at this time began to call upon the Lord ? The statement implies that men had ceased to worship the Lord, but now began again to do so. We can easily understand that Adam would be harassed with most painful doubts as to the extent to which Cain's excommunication might affect his own relations to the " Lord God ;" and as we meet with no word in the sentence on Cain, which would by its plainness relieve his fears, the result may well have been—not that Adam ceased to worship the Almighty, but that he was afraid to worship Him as the " Lord," and to plead with Him the immutability of His purpose ; and therefore fell back upon the relations in which he stood to God as set forth in the first chapter, and worshipped Him, as we afterwards find Melchizedek did, as " the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth."

But, when the house of Seth was fully established, it was revealed to Adam—as we must clearly infer from the Book of the generations of Adam, which forms the subject of the following chapter—that the promised seed of the woman would spring from the line of Seth, and that then accordingly they began again to call on the Name of the Lord.

The history of Adam concludes with the insertion into the Book of God of the Genealogical Table of his descendants in the line of Seth, down to the destruction of the old world. It is called the Book of the generations of Adam, and, as I have previously remarked, clearly shows that, when it began to be compiled, it had already been revealed to Adam that Seth was not, as Eve had said, given to them to supply the place of Abel, but to be the heir of the inheritance which Cain had forfeited.

Doubtless, it may be suggested that this Family Tree was not drawn up until after the Flood, and that then the compiler would naturally confine himself to the line of Seth to which Noah belonged. But the Table has one touch or mark upon it, evidently undesigned, which certifies it as being antediluvian. Moreover, the fact that we have also the line of Cain's descendants inserted, which no descendant of Noah would have had any motive for compiling, strongly supports the assumption that the Table before us was begun in the days before the Flood.

The accidental touch, which stamps the document as antediluvian, is this. It begins with the Creation of man by God, as related in chap. i.; this we should expect, as the Table concerns man's position on the earth. Accordingly, when the Almighty is afterwards mentioned, He continues to be spoken of as "God." There is nothing to require the compiler to bring forward the immutability of God and of His promise. But, when some words of righteous Lamech are inserted, it is recorded that he said, "This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground, which the Lord hath cursed." This I consider indicates that this addition to the Table was made when Noah was born, and the exact words written down which were uttered by the grandson of Enoch and the father of Noah; who, we can easily understand, habitually spoke of the Almighty as the Lord, or the Lord God;—the very words themselves show how near to his heart was the remembrance of the Fall.

This Table I therefore regard as antediluvian in date; moreover what follows in the succeeding chapter shows how well it was understood that the line of Seth was that from which salvation would come forth, and justifies the interpretation I have put on verse 26 of chap. iv.

We will now pause, as the history of the old world ends at this point. In the next chapter we read of its condemnation and destruction, when

Noah and his sons only were spared that the race of mankind should not perish from the earth.

But for one moment I would call your attention to the exclusively spiritual character of the chapters we have been considering. Man writes of what his intellect is concerned with, or of what the human intellect has accomplished. God writes of things spiritual. The history we have here of the old world is its spiritual history. The amount of the population of the old world ; the form of government adopted ; the manners and customs and habits of the people ;—their mutual relations are all unnoticed. Everything that a human writer would consider to be of the first importance to dwell upon is silently passed by. We need no stronger evidence to convince us that we are standing in the Presence of God and listening to His Words.

May He by His Grace cause those Words to sink deep into the human heart, and impress thereon an indestructible belief in the unchangeable righteousness of God, and of His unchangeable purpose to restore in man the broken Image of that righteousness by the operation of His Eternal Mercy.

LECTURE III

*THE TEMPORAL AND SPIRITUAL POSITION OF MAN
UNDER THE COVENANT MADE WITH NOAH
AND HIS SONS*

“And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark ; for thee have I seen righteous before Me in this generation.”—GENESIS vii. 1.

MY last lecture closed with a reference to the Table of the generations of Adam along the line of Seth, given in chap. v. At that point the Book of Genesis opens out to embrace in its purview the whole number of the descendants of Adam, but alas ! only to record their condemnation by the Almighty, and their consequent destruction ; save only that a small remnant was spared, that the purpose of Him, Who cannot change, might yet be accomplished.

It is therefore most instructive to observe how, at this crisis, God keeps constantly before man His own immutability, by causing Himself to be spoken of as the “ Lord God,” the “ Same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever,” alike in passing judgment and in showing mercy. That Name called over man in the

hour of his creation is the sure pledge to him of his ultimate salvation ; and, if God is found so to style Himself when pronouncing judgment, we are thereby assured that even in that hour, mercy, it may be in some hidden way, is rejoicing against judgment. The Christian can bear to keep the thought of the judgment present to his mind, because he knows that He, Who sits on the throne of judgment, is his Saviour and Redeemer. And it has been the same from the beginning. I have already pointed out how it was so, at the time when man first fell from righteousness ; and we shall see, as we proceed, that it was the same when man was sentenced to be destroyed from off the face of the earth.

I desire also to call to your attention the further fact that the Almighty, in His Wisdom, continues to keep His covenant of everlasting life with man, in a strongly marked manner distinct from the grant to him of lordship over the earth. He never allows the lesser to be absorbed in the greater ; nor, in connection with man's lordship, does He ever bring forward His unchangeableness of purpose by speaking of Himself as the Lord God. We have, consequently two accounts of the Deluge, as we have two of the Creation ; the two pairs corresponding the one to the other ; as, in each case, in the first God is spoken of as God simply, in the second as the Lord God ; the first pair concerns man as lord of the earth, the second as the heir of everlasting life.

We proceed now to the study of the story of the Deluge in its Gospel aspect. There are many questions, more or less closely connected with it, which lie outside of our present inquiry, *e.g.* as to the universality or otherwise of the Deluge ; such and other similar questions are either incapable of being answered, or are left to be answered by the learned among men. What we are at this time inquiring into is the manner in which God is accomplishing His original purpose in regard to man, notwithstanding his having fallen into deep depths of sin.

The history commences with a description of the state of moral degradation into which mankind had fallen. It is contained in the first, second, and fourth verses of the sixth chapter; the third verse is an interpolation, and is as follows: "And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh ; yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years." There appears to me to be something inexpressively tender and compassionate in this interpolation. God was describing the wickedness of man, and was about to say, "It repented Him that He had made man on the earth ;" and to go on to pronounce sentence of destruction upon man ;—but, lest those, however few they might be, who still served Him, should lose all hope, and in their despair their faith should fail them ;—and to show to us that, whenever He maketh inquisition for blood, He is always mindful of mercy,—God pauses. He

then turns to those who had found grace in His sight, reminds them of the unchangeableness of His purpose by speaking to them as the Lord, and uttering words, which were plainly words of mercy, even though their actual meaning may have been hidden.

We read, "the Lord God said, yet his (man's) days shall be an hundred and twenty years." How are we to understand these words? If you have followed me, you will see that they must have reference to man as an heir of everlasting life, because they were spoken by "the Lord," and consequently do not apply to man as lord of the earth, as, in that case, God would have been spoken of simply as God.

Again, all commentators recognize that the meaning of the words does not lie on the surface ; but that marks the utterances of God in respect of man's inheritance of everlasting life. When He speaks of man as lord of the earth, His language is always plain, so that he who runs may read.

At the risk of a slight repetition, it will be well to make clear this difference in the language of the Almighty, by recurring to the account of the Creation and the Fall. In chap. i. the words of God are very plain, when bestowing on man lordship over creation ; so plain that it is upon those words we ordinarily dwell. In chap. ii., however, we find ourselves in the midst of figurative language, not perhaps so symbolical and figurative as in the

concluding book of the Bible, the Revelation of S. John, but, nevertheless, figurative so that we have to search for their meaning. Thus it appears that what our Lord said of His own teaching is true of the whole Bible, which is His Word. "I speak," He said, "to them in parables, that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand ; whilst to you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God."

It was the same at the time of the Fall. The Lord's words, in regard to man's lordship over the earth, are perfectly clear, whilst in respect of man's salvation He spoke in parables, saying, "The seed of the woman shall bruise thy head." As we proceed we shall find the same distinction observed in the present case. How, then, are we to understand these words, spoken by the Lord, that man's days shall yet be an hundred and twenty years?

One interpretation oftentimes proposed is that the Lord thereby reduced the length of man's life on earth. But were that their meaning, they would refer to man's position as lord of creation, and then (1) God would be spoken of as God, not as the Lord, and (2) they would be plain, not figurative.

Another interpretation is that the Flood was delayed for a hundred and twenty years, that Noah might preach the Gospel of repentance. But (1) Noah is spoken of as a preacher of righteousness by S. Peter, not of repentance. (2) We do not read of any such time being allowed to Adam to repent. (3) No time

for repentance was granted either to Canaan, the son of Ham, or to Sodom and Gomorrah. (4) Repentance is eminently a grace of the Gospel, and was unknown, except as remorse, to the souls of men before the days of David.

I will proceed now to explain how I understand these words. (1) We read, "the Lord said;" He spake, Whose purpose cannot fail, therefore they refer to man as an heir of salvation. (2) The words must consequently be figuratively understood. Now, 120 is $10 \times 4 \times 3$, and 10 is the number of the commandments, 4 is the number which with man signifies completion—to be foursquare is to be perfectly formed—whilst 3 is the sacred number, expressing the grace of God; 120 therefore signifies the perfect keeping of the commandments by the Grace of God; that is, the Lord in a figure said, though the thoughts of man's heart are now but evil continually, man shall yet attain to righteousness, and so attaining, shall live for ever before Me.

In this way I understand these words, and, as I have already said, they appear to be interpolated in mercy to reassure our trembling hearts, and to strengthen us to hear the judgment of the Almighty upon the wickedness which He found so great upon the earth.

Indeed all, whilst it is of judgment, is also of mercy. We read, "it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart;" but that repentance was bounded, that

grief limited by the unchangeableness of the Lord. His original purpose could not be overthrown. So, whilst the Lord repented that He had made man, it is added, "but Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." Again the Lord proceeds to say, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth." Does He add these words, "whom I have created," to remind Himself and us of His unchangeable nature, so that, having created man, He cannot suffer him to utterly perish?

Let us now proceed. We are to expect to find two accounts of the destruction of man, one of man as lord of the earth, the other as heir of everlasting life. And it is so, as, beginning at verse 9 in the sixth chapter to the end, we have the account of the preparations Noah was commanded to make for his own deliverance when man, as *lord of the earth*, was to be destroyed, and it is God Who speaks, simply as God. In the next chapter it is the Lord God Who speaks, and His directions are consequently for the deliverance of Noah, as *the heir of Salvation*.

Let us compare the accounts from this point of view. The first account is very explicit, and its details plain and clear, as, from what I have already said, we should expect; the second account is brief, and its purpose can only be inferentially gathered.

In chap. vi., verses 11, 12, 13, we have the reason for the destruction of man again stated, but markedly in reference to his inheritance of the earth. "The earth," we are told, "was corrupt," and "the

earth was filled with violence ;" again, "the earth was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth ;" "the earth is filled with violence through them ;" and lastly, "I will destroy them with the earth." These last words are very noticeable ; the earth, man's inheritance, is filled with violence through man, therefore will I destroy his inheritance, and at the same time man also.

In this way the destruction of the earth is put most prominently forward, and every word spoken by God is of the earth.

We will now turn to the second account in chap. vii. The chapter opens with saying, "The Lord God said unto Noah ;" this change of style from God to the Lord at once certifies us that we are now called to look upon what is about to happen from another standpoint. We are not now to see God dealing with the earth and its lord, but to see the Lord God working out His unchangeable purpose towards man, as an heir of everlasting life. The corrupt state of the earth and the wickedness of man are consequently not mentioned, but the Lord instead speaks of the righteousness of Noah (verse 1) : "Thee have I seen righteous before Me." The burden of chap. vi. was the wickedness of man ; the burden of chap. vii. is the righteousness of Noah (see verse 5) : "Noah did according to all that the Lord commanded him." Noah is commanded to come into the ark, because in seven days the rain will descend upon the earth, and every living substance

will be destroyed ; but why this destruction is coming upon the earth is not added. Thus the first account is full and plain and of the earth ; the second is brief, and so far mysterious that its purpose is not set forth on the surface.

It contains, however, two notes or marks which explain its purpose. The first is that it is the Lord Who speaks, and therefore we know that He is delivering man, that he may inherit everlasting life ; and this is confirmed by the second note, which is this : “ the Lord said unto Noah, of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female ; of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female.” In the first case, God said, “ of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort, shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee ; they shall be male and female.” There is no discrepancy here, but a difference for an evident purpose.

In the first case the command was to take pairs of every living thing to preserve them on the earth, “ to keep them alive,” as it said ; the one object for the lord of creation taking them by pairs into the ark was that he should not lose aught of what had been entrusted to him in the beginning. In the second case, however, the Lord had a different purpose in view. He had before instructed fallen man to worship Him by sacrifice ; therefore, knowing that Noah, who had been pronounced to be “ a just man and perfect in his generation,” would, as we afterwards read he did, offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving when delivered

after the work of destruction was over, the Lord ordered him to take with him seven pairs of *clean* beasts. There is, as I have said, no discrepancy here. In the first case God did not limit Noah to taking one pair, the gist of the command was that he should take male and female to preserve them alive ; consequently on the second occasion the Lord could direct Noah to take seven pairs of clean beasts, provided only that each pair, in accordance with the first command, consisted of male and female. The command to take of clean beasts by sevens, and of beasts that are not clean by twos, points directly towards sacrifice.

These two notes, (1) that the Almighty is styled "the Lord," (2) that provision is made for sacrifice, sufficiently set forth, I consider, the spiritual purpose of the second account ; at the same time that purpose, as in other cases, has to be inferred, or gradually unfolded in the course of ages. In both accounts it is said of Noah that *he did according to all that was commanded him*, and that at the end, *the Lord*, not simply God, *shut him in* ; the Lord thus assuring him that every promise and every word that had been spoken should surely be accomplished by Him Who cannot change.

In the following chapter to verse 20 we have an account of the waters abating, until at length Noah went forth, and everything that had life with him, out of the ark to reoccupy the earth.

All that is of the earth, and Noah is spoken of as

having acted under the directions of God, given to him as still lord of all flesh, both of fowl and of cattle ; and therefore God is styled simply "God." But in the 20th verse Noah is presented to us not as the lord of the earth, but as one who was in covenant with God with sacrifice ; and we read he "builded an altar unto the Lord," to Him Who had shut him into the ark to deliver him, and Who had preserved him and his sons alive, that He might yet accomplish through them His purpose in creating man. Noah then offered upon the altar a burnt sacrifice of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and we are told, "the Lord smelled a sweet savour ; and the Lord said in His Heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake ; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." We shall presently see how this resolve of the Almighty was assured to man by a new covenant made with him ; but here we are only told what the Lord said in His Heart.

We must, however, pause at this point, to dwell for awhile on these words of the Lord, as we had before read in chap. vi. 5, 6 : "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him exceedingly." To some it seems inexplicable, that He Who cannot change should first destroy man because the imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil

continually ; and afterwards declare that He would not again on that account destroy the earth.

May not the explanation be that the Lord is revealing to us in this veiled form that man, after the Deluge, stands on a higher spiritual platform to what he did before, and that his exaltation brings him into closer contact with the mercies of the Almighty ?

Let us, then, inquire if we can find any foundation on which to rest this explanation. Let us begin by comparing the head of the new world with the head of the old—Noah with Adam.

1. Noah, through his character, was nearer to God than Adam, as there is nothing said of Adam in the Book of God corresponding to what we read of Noah (see chap. vi. 9), that “he was a just man, and perfect in his generation, and Noah walked with God, and Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.”

2. God gave a commandment to Adam, and he was disobedient. God also gave a commandment to Noah, which proved his faith ; as our Saviour tells us the Flood came suddenly, without any warnings from nature, so that Noah was saved, not through foreseeing what was about to happen, but because he believed and was obedient. It may therefore be with the purpose of fixing our attention on the obedience of Noah that we are twice told that “Noah did according to all that was commanded him ;” first, when God gave him direction as the lord of all

creatures that had life (chap. vi. 22), and again when the Lord spoke to him as heir of the promise of life (chap. vii. 5).

3. Adam appears to have been silent when sentence was pronounced upon him ; his knowledge of God was undeveloped ; experience had not yet taught him how to frame his thoughts and his words. In the case of Noah it was far different ; his first act was to offer a thank-offering to the Lord, of such a description as to make our largest offerings appear as nothing.

We cannot, I think, but conclude from this comparison, that man in the line of Seth, which was both the guardian and inheritor of the promise of life, at least that particular line whose generations are given in chap. v., had very greatly advanced both morally and spiritually. Of Enoch we read, "He walked with God : and he was not ; for God took him ;" and again of Noah, who was in the third generation from Enoch, we are told, he also walked with God, and we may add, God took him—for He placed him in the ark and delivered him. Thus the new world is descended from one who is described as *just and righteous* ; and may we not trust in hope, that, as the old world suffered with Adam, when the sins of the fathers were visited upon the children ; so, in the case of the new world, mercy was shown to thousands for the sake of just Noah, "who did according to all that God commanded him" ? And lastly, is it not allowable for us to see this exaltation of the descendants

of Noah revealed to us in the declaration of Him, Who cannot change, that His attitude towards the imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was changed? How is this possible, if the Lord cannot change, unless man's position be changed?

If this be the explanation, we have, as we should expect, the double blessing—the blessing on Noah as God's vicegerent on the earth, assuring him that it should not be again destroyed by a flood; and the blessing on him as heir of everlasting life, in the declaration that the imagination of the thoughts of man's heart, though still evil, should be embraced within the mercies of God in a degree they had not been before.

We come now, in the next chapter (ix.), to the ordering of man's life after he had been delivered from the waters of the Flood.

The same order is followed as in the beginning; chap. i. deals with man's temporal inheritance as God's vicegerent on earth, chap. ii. with his spiritual position as endowed with a capacity to inherit everlasting life: so is it at this time. In the first part of the chapter, as far as verse 18, we have a series of blessings and promises which concern this present life, *e.g.* the fear of man was put on the beasts of the earth; man was given flesh to eat, but was not to eat it with the blood; man's life was not to be taken; and the bow was set in the cloud, as a token of the covenant between God and His vicegerent. All these things are of the earth, and are not stamped

with the mark of eternity, as they are said to have been spoken by God, as God simply, not as the Lord.

The latter half of the chapter concerns man's spiritual inheritance, and the same contrast which we have before observed between the two blessings prevails also in this case ; the temporal are pronounced in language such as " he who runs may read," whilst the spiritual are enwrapt in imagery, or figure, or symbol. In the latter case we have a story, brief, but replete with enigma, which is made the channel of conveying to Shem and his descendants the guardianship and inheritance of the sacred line, out of which should come the promised seed of the woman. At the same time this inestimable privilege is not so bestowed upon the family of Shem as to exclude those of Ham and Japheth, but the interest of both is emphatically secured. Thus in this chapter we have the future of the race, in both its relations, definitely established.

The story itself is too well known for it to be necessary to repeat it at length ; I may therefore at once proceed to remark upon it. The first thing that strikes the reader is the prominence given to Canaan. In verse 18 we read, " And the sons of Noah, that went forth out of the ark, were Shem, Ham, and Japheth ; and Ham is the father of Canaan ; " and in verse 22, when Ham is again mentioned, he is described as " the father of Canaan." I do not consider that we can for a moment suppose that Ham

is twice so spoken of, on account of his son's degradation. It is not customary to brand a father with the crimes of his son, and least of all can we suppose that mention would have been made of Canaan on that account in verse 18. I can only understand this prominence given to Canaan to signify that he was a person of considerable distinction, perhaps both from force of character and by right of birth. He may have been the heir-apparent to the hegemony of the race ; if so, we see the meaning of the sentence pronounced upon him : he was degraded from being the head to be the servant of his brethren.

Now, it is generally acknowledged that Shem was not Noah's firstborn ; the first place is always assigned to him in the Book of God, because the blessing of his father constituted him the progenitor of our Lord according to the flesh. But that he was not the firstborn seems to be clear from the following data. In Genesis v. 32, we read, "Noah was 500 years old ; and Noah begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth." In Genesis ix. 28, 29, we are told, "Noah lived after the flood 350 years, and all the days of Noah were 950 years ;" he was therefore 600 years old when he came out of the ark. But in Genesis xi. 10, we find Shem was 100 years old, and begat Arphaxad, two years after the flood ; therefore, if these figures may be understood arithmetically, he was 98 when Noah was 600 years old ; consequently, he was born when Noah was 502, and therefore was not the eldest, as Noah began to beget children when he was 500.

Again, as Japheth is always placed last, we cannot conceive that he could have been the eldest, unless he also had been deposed by Noah for some grievous sin ; but I know of no word in the Bible on which we can base such an assumption. It is the case, however, that the Authorized Version renders (Genesis x. 21), "unto Shem, also the brother of Japheth the elder," but the Revised Version renders it, "unto Shem, the elder brother of Japheth ;" this latter is the reading which most modern commentators accept (see note in the Speaker's Commentary). We may therefore conclude that Ham was the first-born of Noah, and I now proceed to show why I consider Canaan was the eldest son of Ham.

In Genesis ix. 24, 25, we read, "Noah knew what *his younger son* had done unto him ; and he said, Cursed be Canaan." Now, we cannot suppose that Noah had at that time no other grandson but Canaan. God had blessed him and his sons with increase. We may therefore assume that they were already increasing in number. If, then, there were several grandsons, we should expect the reading to be "one of his younger sons," or grandsons, unless the one who had done the wrong had some special claim to be spoken of as *the* younger son, *par excellence*. That right could only attach to the eldest son of Ham, as heir to the hegemony ; and who, as such, would have been treated with distinction from his birth.

Again, as such eldest son, his relations to Ham

and to Noah would be closer than those of any of the others, and that would explain why Ham and Canaan seem to be almost identified in the story. In Genesis x. 6, Canaan has the last place among the sons of Ham ; but no other place could he occupy in the Book of God, who had been sentenced to be a servant of servants to his brethren.

If Canaan's natural place in the family of Noah was what I have thus inferred it to have been, we see, as I have already remarked, the full force and appositeness of the curse pronounced upon him. Canaan, the heir-apparent to Noah, had treated with dishonour the head of the race ; he was consequently pronounced unworthy to succeed to the over-lordship, and was sentenced to be a servant to those over whom he should have ruled.

Having pronounced that sentence, Noah turned to Shem, and said, "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem." These are but few words in themselves—very few compared with the detailed instructions and promises given to Noah when he resumed his position on the earth as God's vicegerent. Again, whilst the latter are expressed in the simplest and plainest language, these words, "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem," are enigmatical in form. *Blessed be the Lord God of Shem* ; that is, through Shem, God, Who cannot change, will accomplish His unchangeable purpose towards man, that is, the "Lord God will bring forth out of the line of Shem the promised seed of the woman," and so accomplish the purpose

which He proposed to Himself when He created man, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.

And how far shall that purpose extend, how widely shall it reach? In the case of Adam, his eldest son was cast out; will it be the same with the heir of Noah? Not so; as Noah proceeds at once to set a limit to his curse, and says of Canaan, though thrown down from his own proper position, he is not to be cast off, but shall share in the blessing of Shem, and dwell in the house of his exalted brother. Noah then turned to Japheth, and said, "God," not the Lord God, "shall enlarge Japheth." This blessing of enlargement therefore marks off his position amongst his brethren *on the earth*, but has not the stamp of eternity impressed upon it. Noah, however, having said, "God shall enlarge Japheth," proceeds to secure to him and his descendants their portion in the blessing of Shem, by adding, "he shall dwell in the tents of Shem."

The special blessing on Japheth bestowed on him a large earthly inheritance, and we know that they are his descendants who have peopled Europe and a large part of India. His Greek descendants were enlarged in intellect beyond any other race; his Roman descendants were enlarged in power; and in these last days, when his descendants in Europe have found their home in the Church—the tent of Shem—they have been so enlarged, being quickened and illumined by grace, as to occupy the first place

amongst all the descendants of Noah in all that belongs to the dominion of man on the earth.

I will close this lecture at this point. We have seen Noah and his sons rescued from the Flood, and replaced upon the earth ; and have heard how the Almighty equipped them for the work which lay before them, as lords of the earth and as heirs of everlasting life.

In the next lecture, however, we shall find Holy Scripture tells us nothing in respect of the manner in which man again subdued the earth ; for that lies within the province of the intellect of man, and has not to be revealed. On the other hand, if we read carefully what is written, we shall find much to instruct us spiritually, and to assure us that the Lord God is not ever far from any one of us.

I would, however, before closing, call your attention to the striking fact, that, up to this date, and indeed onwards until the time of Abraham, there is nothing recorded of the chosen servants of God which affords us any insight into their lives and individual character. Of Adam, from the date of his fall, we are told nothing, except that the length of his life was 930 years ; otherwise the Book of God is silent, not only in regard to his manner of life, but also in respect of the thoughts of his heart. No one word tells us how he bore himself towards God, nor how he acted as lord of creation ; we know not how and when Eve died ; nor who were gathered round the deathbed of the

first father of the human race. We know that Isaac and Ishmael closed the eyes of Abraham ; that Esau and Jacob were together at Isaac's bedside when he died ; but how Adam lived and died we know not.

It is almost the same with Noah, the second head of mankind. Noah lived for 500 years upon the earth. Once, at the expiration of that length of time, we are told he "was a just man, and perfect in his generation, and walked with God." But in what way he walked with God we are not told ; neither are we shown anything of that daily life which entitled him to be described as "perfect in his generation." When we pause to think of it, it must strike us as strange that these men should find favour with God, should so please Him that one of them, Enoch, should pass into the next life without dying, and yet the Almighty, in His love for them and care for us, should not set their lives before us as an example. Later on, when we find this silence no longer maintained, but we have put before us for our instruction, much of the lives of Abraham and his descendants, I will offer what I conceive to be the explanation of this reserve in the case of those who in the old world "found grace in the eyes of the Lord."

I only mention it at this stage, when we are parting with the old world and entering upon the consideration of the new relations of man both towards God and towards the earth, which followed upon the Almighty renewing His covenant with Noah and his

sons ; as my review of those relations as they existed in the past would be incomplete without my doing so. That silence reminds us of the providential care with which the Almighty has withdrawn from our view the lives of the Lord's apostles.

LECTURE IV

*THE TEMPORAL AND SPIRITUAL POSITION OF MAN
CONTINUED UNTIL THE TIME OF ABRAM
BEING BLESSED BY MELCHIZEDEK*

“Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee : And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great ; and thou shalt be a blessing : And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee : and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”—GENESIS xii. 1-3.

I WILL begin this present lecture by adding a few words to what I said in my last concerning the blessing or prophecy of Noah in respect of his three sons.

It is important to point out, *that they were all three counted worthy, when the rest of mankind were destroyed, of being saved with Noah.*

And what is further noticeable is, that when lordship over the earth was restored to Noah, *it was directly bestowed upon his sons, equally with himself*, as we read, “God blessed *Noah* and *his sons*, and said unto *them*, Be ye fruitful, and multiply, and replenish

the earth." Yet again, when God covenanted no more to destroy the earth with a flood, we read, "God spake unto Noah and *to his sons with him.*" It was not, as in the case of Moses, that the Lord spake to Noah, and he to his sons ; but these three men were so highly exalted in honour that God admitted them into His Presence, and spake to them as He spake to Noah.

May we not see in this an evangelical pledge, that the three divisions of the human race which should overspread the earth should be *co-heirs of the salvation promised through the seed of the woman* ? And, in support of this, we cannot but notice how careful Noah showed himself when foretelling a different temporal future for each division, to secure to each his interest in the common salvation. As, when he announced, by calling the name of the "Lord God" over Shem, that the sacred line was to trace its descent through his family, a place in the tent of Shem is secured by the sure word of prophecy to both the families of Canaan and Japheth.

We may further observe that Noah did not disinherit Canaan and deprive him of his portion in the inheritance of the earth. That portion was left to him, though at the same time, by a threefold declaration, he was reduced to be a servant to his brethren. As Noah, when addressing Canaan, says, "a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren ;" then, when blessing Shem, he repeated it, "that Canaan shall be his servant ;" and lastly, when

calling Japheth into the tent of Shem, he adds, "and Canaan shall be his servant." Thus is Canaan bound to service by a threefold cord, which, we are told, cannot be quickly broken ; yet at the same time he retains his interest and position in both the temporal and spiritual covenants which the Almighty had renewed with Noah *and his sons*.

We must now proceed with our inquiry to ascertain after what manner the Almighty kept before man His evangelical purpose of gathering them into one fold, wherein they should inherit everlasting life ; whilst in accordance with His blessing on Noah, He caused them to spread abroad over the earth.

The tenth chapter opens in this way, "Now these are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth." Ham, we notice, is not omitted, as was the case with Cain in the Book of the generations of Adam (chap. v.). There is no distinction here made between any of the sons ; and the lists of the descendants of each concludes with the same words : "these are the sons of — after their families, after their tongues, in their countries, and in their nations." What is the lesson to be learned from these tables ? I believe it to be one strictly *moral* and *spiritual*, not intellectual. I consider the purpose, for which these genealogies are inserted in the Book of God, is not to anticipate the researches of historians, but to assure the scattered descendants of Noah that they are all continually before God, before Him, "after their

families, after their tongues, in their countries, and in their nations."

What fulness of meaning is given by the genealogical tables in the Book of God to the words of S. Peter, in the great Council at Jerusalem, when he described the Gentiles as those "upon whom My Name is called, saith *the Lord*." When was it first called upon them? Was it not when Noah gave the descendants of Ham and Japheth a place in the tents of Shem? And do not these genealogies, by being inserted in Genesis, assure us that that Name continued to rest upon the Gentiles as they spread themselves over the earth? Note carefully what is written in verses 8, 9: "Cush begat Nimrod. . . . He was a mighty hunter *before the Lord*." Mark it, not before God, but before "the Lord," the unchangeable I Am.

Now, if Eastern traditions are trustworthy which describe Nimrod as a man of violence, and usurper of authority over his fellow-men, this statement, that he was still before the Lord, is an evangelical announcement of the highest value. It assures us, that, although the sons of Ham and Japheth might sin very grievously, nevertheless they were not cast off, but remained still before the Lord, that He might accomplish in them that which he had spoken by Noah.

We are confirmed in this assurance by finding the Almighty again spoken of as "the Lord" in the account, in the eleventh chapter, of the confusion of tongues. We read, "Therefore is the name of it

called Babel ; because *the Lord* did there confuse the language of all the earth ; and from thence did *the Lord* scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth." The confusion of tongues consequently cannot be regarded as a curse upon man, but as a *chastisement* of man's heavenly Father, Who still loved them, and gave them an assurance that His Presence abode with them by styling Himself "the Lord." These Tables, then, strengthen the faith and hope of those who through the long ages waited for redemption, whilst they left the intellect of man free to investigate for itself the early history of our race ;—for remember the genealogies in chap. x. are devoid of dates.

As we look upon this vast scene, and call to mind that the Name of the Lord is called over all the nations of the earth ; that all are His care ; that He bears with the Nimrods and violent of the earth ; and chastens those who, as at Babel, exalt themselves against Him ;—we learn to realize that the election of the Church does not carry with it any rejection of others ; but that, since the days of Noah, the whole race of man has been embraced in a common salvation, *secured to them by the Almighty styling Himself the Lord God.*

All the families of the sons of Noah have their names written in the Book of God, and are all ever before the Lord, the unchangeable I Am. Because of men's sins, He has made darkness His secret place, and summoned thick clouds to cover Him ; but His

mercies abide over all His works, and all the families of the earth, none excepted, are blessed in Abraham. And all through the long ages the Lord God out of the thick darkness has continually sent forth rays of light—it may be that they were dim and feeble—to lighten every one that has come into the world.

Of late years several writers have undertaken the task of comparing together all the religions of the earth, and showing that in no case are men without some faint glimmering knowledge of God's eternal Power. Unfortunately, in several cases, such works have lost their value, from their authors regarding religion as an *intellectual edifice*, gradually built up and beautified as man has advanced in knowledge. On the other hand, very profitable would it have been had they first realized the *spiritual* relations in which Noah and his sons stood towards the Lord God. Although the light of the Spirit did not abide within them—as the Holy Ghost was not yet given—its light shone around them, so that Abraham could see the Day of the Lord, and rejoice in seeing it. And if Abraham could see, so also, we may feel sure, could Noah. We may feel sure that in blessing his sons Noah was no mere mechanical instrument, but knew in some measure the import of his words, and could explain them to his sons. Afterwards, alas! there followed a universal falling away, and we are now about to consider the means which the Lord God prepared to restore men to righteousness, and to abide for ever in the Presence of Him Who is Light.

Having thus learned how the Almighty, in fulfilment of the temporal blessing, distributed the families of Shem, Ham, and Japheth over the earth, we are next shown the provision made for the guardianship and continuance of the line of the promised seed of the woman in the house of Shem. The same order is observed in this case as in those which have preceded ; we have first the temporal blessing, then the spiritual, and the two are treated of separately, without confusion or admixture.

Thus, although we have had the generations of Shem given along with those of Ham and Japheth in the tenth chapter, we are not now referred back to that table ; but a new table is supplied, in which the lineal descent of those through whom the sacred line was conveyed onwards from generation to generation is distinctly marked out. The table is of this form : "Arphaxad lived five and thirty years, and begat Salah : and Arphaxad lived after he had begat Salah four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters," and so on in like manner. The former table gave us the sons of Shem by their families ; but this does not, as we read Arphaxad begat sons and daughters without their names being recorded. What we have here is a single line, commencing with Shem and ending with Abram, and consequently it is the chain in which the sacred line was preserved, as we have already learned that it was deposited with Shem, and shall immediately read that it was entrusted to the keeping of Abram.

Being such, we must pause to examine it. What we at once notice is, that the table gives the *age* at which each member of the line begat his successor, and also the *age* to which he attained, and the question arises, for what purpose are these figures given? If we turn to S. Luke, chap. iii., in which the generations from Adam to our Lord are given, we find no ages mentioned. But that table is the one which possesses the greatest authority, not simply because it is the last, but chiefly because it is the solemn attestation of the Spirit to all mankind that He Whom the Baptist hesitatingly baptized is the promised seed of the woman. We conclude, therefore, that the enumeration of ages is not an essential factor in the record. That, however, still leaves us to inquire why they are inserted in the table before us?

In the non-narrative parts of the Bible—and it is to such parts these tables belong—numbers are frequently to be understood symbolically, as, *e.g.*, in the Revelation of S. John, which is the complement to the Book of Genesis; and, as I have explained, we must understand the number 120 in chap. vi. 3. It may, therefore, possibly be the same in the case of the table before us. That it is so seems to follow from the insertion of Canaan between Arphaxad and Salah in the table of S. Luke, and in the Septuagint in this place, as we must conclude therefrom that, when one person is said in the table to beget another, one or more generations may intervene

between the two, the table only certifying that the one is in the direct line from the other. The genealogical table in S. Matthew supports this supposition, as it is constructed on this principle ; and if such is the case with the table before us, the names given may be those of prominent persons in the long line ; and the numbers given, as the years of their lives, may in a mystical manner—the key to which we do not yet possess—denote the long lapse of time which intervened between one name and the next in succession.

Another weighty reason for inclining to the hypothesis that the numbers before us are to be interpreted symbolically is, as I have already observed, that God respects His gifts to man, and having endowed him with gifts of intellect, does not make known by revelation that which man can search out for himself by arduous study. At this present time many men of science are with great labour and remarkable ability engaged in unravelling the records of the past, with a view to ascertain the antiquity of the race ; whereas, if these figures have an arithmetical value, by simple addition we learn the age of the world, and the researches of men of science are superseded.

We will now pass on to that which is our own proper subject. In the call of Abram we enter on a new era in the history of our race. It is the " Lord " Who calls him, and thereby we learn that, although the outward purpose of that call was to found a

nation of the seed of Abraham, the inward purpose had regard to the sacred line of the promised seed of the woman. The nation was formed of Abraham's seed in order that the sacred line might have a home within it, and be trained and purified by the trials and discipline with which God proved the nation, until there was born of it that meek and lowly Virgin, to call whom Blessed, as the Mother of the Son of God, is the joy of all generations.

Further, as, according to the genealogical table in chap. x., Arphaxad was not the firstborn of Shem, it may not have been known along which of the descendants of Shem the sacred line would pass, until the Lord announced that it would descend through Abram and his seed, by saying to him, "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed;" and therefore as the heir of that Promise his descent was specially traced back to Shem.

The Lord called Abram with a threefold call, (1) to get out of his country, (2) his kindred, and (3) his father's house. He obeyed the first, when with his father he went forth from Ur of the Chaldees; he answered to the second call when he departed from Haran; and to the third when he separated himself from Lot. Then, but not before, did the Lord bestow on him *personally* the whole land of Canaan (see chap. xiii. 15). As we read, "The Lord said unto Abram, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward:

for all the land which thou seest, *to thee* will I give it, and to thy seed for ever."

Before that, whilst Abram had still with him Lot, his brother's son, the land was only granted to his seed (chap. xii. 7). The passage runs, "The Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land."

We next read that after Abram had entered the land of Canaan to dwell there, it was wasted by a famine, and as it was very grievous (chap. xii. 10), Abram went down into Egypt. Later on, on the occasion of another famine, "the Lord" appeared unto Isaac, and forbade him to go into Egypt (chap. xxvi. 2); though afterwards, in the days of the seven years' famine, Jacob removed there with his entire household; and lastly, the child Jesus, by the command of "the Lord," was carried into Egypt to be protected. Is all this simply historical? And, so far as Egypt is concerned, may we call it accidental that the sacred line, and ultimately Christ, sojourned for a season in that land? Or, has it some evangelical meaning? I think the latter.

A place was given by Noah to Canaan in the tent of Shem, but with a condition attached that he should be his servant. It was meet, therefore, when Abram was exalted to be the depository of the blessing on Shem, so that the sacred line should be continued in his family, that Canaan should perform some act of service to Abram, to establish his own claim to a place in the spiritual inheritance. And

as the Egyptians held the first place amongst the families of Ham, and as there can be no doubt that the whole race of Ham was included in the sentence on Canaan, service rendered by the Egyptians as the foremost family might be accepted on behalf of the whole race. Now, certainly, whatever may be the meaning of the episode of Sarai, Pharaoh appears to have treated Abram with distinguished honour, and to have ministered to him abundantly out of his substance. For whilst no mention is made of the greatness of Abram's wealth before he went down into Egypt, we are told immediately on his return to Canaan that "Abram was very rich in cattle and *silver and gold.*"

Moreover, that this great increase was the result of Abram's visit to Egypt seems to follow from its being found on his return impossible, or at least very difficult, for Abram and Lot to continue together, though no such difficulty would seem to have been experienced before. It may be that Pharaoh was not personally conscious of fulfilling a prophecy in treating Abram with distinguished honour. But as Josephus tells us one purpose Abram had in going into Egypt was to discuss certain theological questions with the Egyptian priests, the claim of Abram to be the inheritor of the blessing of Shem may have been very widely known ; and, if so, would have been known to the Egyptian priests, and Pharaoh may have consciously and purposely paid Abram all the honour due to the distinguished head of the rival

race of Shem. But on this I propose to say a few words later on.

Isaac did not go down into Egypt, but on the contrary was forbidden to do so. Why was this ?

The race of Ham had already, as we have seen, ministered to Abram, and in him to his seed, consequently there was not the same need for Isaac to visit Egypt ; whilst, on the other hand, there was a special reason why Isaac should not go down there at the time he contemplated doing so. We must bear in mind that it was immediately after Abram's return to Canaan from Egypt that the land before promised was *given* to Abram and his seed after him (Genesis xiii. 15). And further, this gift of the land was ratified by a covenant, when the rite of circumcision was instituted (*vide* Genesis xvii.). We read there God said, "I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession ; and I will be their God. And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep My covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is My covenant, which ye shall keep, between Me and you, and thy seed after thee. Every man child among you shall be circumcised. . . . And the uncircumcised man child . . . shall be cut off from his people ; he hath broken my covenant." Abraham, and Ishmael, his son, and his whole household were at once circumcised, and so the covenant in regard to the land of Canaan was fully established, notwithstanding that

complete possession of the inheritance, thus made over to the family of Abraham, was not to be at once enjoyed.

As, then, the land of Canaan was by God's gift the inheritance of Isaac, when this famine occurred—the first apparently after the covenant had been ratified—God required the land to own its lord, and to support him. He therefore directed Isaac to remain in faith on his own territory and to sow. He did so, and the obedient land, we are told, rendered back Isaac an hundred-fold in acknowledgment of his lordship.

So at least I read the passage. I understand it to mean that God in this way showed to Isaac that his lordship was a reality, so that if he, and his seed after him, kept the commandments of God, the land, blessed with fertility by God, would bring forth abundantly. And, indeed, we know that in after ages it sustained the burden of a dense population.

We come now to the case of Jacob, on whom, with Abraham and Isaac, to constitute a threefold cord, the Lord God bestowed the double temporal and spiritual blessing. A famine occurred again in his time, and on this occasion the land did not fulfil its task of supporting its lord. God, however, appeared to him, as he had done to Isaac; but, instead of directing him to abide on his inheritance, He told him to go down into Egypt.

Why was this distinction made? To explain this, we must anticipate a little, but there can be no difficulty in doing so, as the history of Jacob is known

to us all. Jacob twice sought to secure to himself the inheritance of the firstborn, apparently assuming that the blessing, given immediately by the Lord both to Abraham and Isaac, could in that way become his portion. The Lord God did not withhold the blessing, but appeared to Jacob at Bethel, and bestowed it on him, in the selfsame words in which he had conferred it on Abraham ; but in Jacob's case there was linked to it suffering. He was fleeing from the land of Canaan at the very time he received the gift of it from the Lord. He afterwards returned by the direction of the Lord, Who bade him sojourn in the land ; but, when the famine came, it refused its support to him ; probably on account of the deeds of violence of Jacob's sons. So, when Joseph sent for his father, God appeared to him again, and told him to go down to Egypt, promising to make of him whilst there a great nation. He went down, and for a long period the children of Ham ministered to him and his descendants. Pharaoh's instructions to Joseph were of this sort : "The land of Egypt is before thee ; in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell." There they abode, and were nourished for nigh two hundred years, whilst they grew into a great nation.

During all this time the children of Ham were making good, though we must suppose unconsciously, their claim to be received into the tent of Shem, by ministering to him in his descendants. At last, however, they rebelled against their lot, which

required of them service, and sought to reduce to slavery those whom they should have served. Then after the children of Israel had been tried with very great sufferings, "the Lord God"—mark the style—"the Lord God brought them out with a mighty Hand." Note also it was the Lord God Who overthrew Pharaoh in the Red Sea, therefore the destruction of the Egyptians was not as that of the old world; the Name of the Lord God, Whose purpose cannot change, it still called over them; bidding us, therefore, look forward to their sharing in the deliverance which, in the fulness of time, was wrought for man by the promised seed of the woman.

In support of this hope, I must still stop, before returning to Abraham, to point out, that as Abraham went into Egypt to be ministered to by Canaan or Ham, so in the fulness of time the Child Jesus, by the command of the Lord, was carried down into Egypt, and there opportunity was granted to Canaan to minister to Him Who came to convert the tent of Shem into an imperishable building. And though they may not have known Him, yet will He be ready to say, "I was a stranger and ye took Me in; ye have been My servant, and so a place in My House is your inheritance."

To return to Abraham. After a season Abram again "went up out of Egypt," when it became convenient for him to separate himself from Lot.

Lot chose the fertile plains of Sodom and removed there; and the narrative concludes (Gen. xiii. 13.)

with the remark, "the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly."

Note the difference of language in Genesis vi. 12, 13. There we read, "God"—not "the Lord"—"looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt. . . . And God"—not "the Lord"—"said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is before Me." But now the men are said to be sinners before *the Lord*, before Him Who, though the thoughts of men's hearts are evil, will in His own time accomplish man's redemption.

I have already pointed out how carefully, on the occasion of the dispersion of mankind before Babel, the Almighty, by styling Himself "the Lord God," maintained the different races so scattered abroad within the unity of the covenant of redemption; and now we see Him again preserving within that covenant Sodom and Gomorrah, though their wickedness was great; as we have just before seen was the case with the Egyptians. Oh, that the Jew could have remembered this, when the sound of the Gospel went out into all lands! Our Lord was mindful of it when He said, "It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah at the day of judgment than for that city." He remembered that when Sodom was destroyed it was present before the Almighty as "the Lord God;" whilst it was not so with the old world, and in regard to that He maintained unbroken silence.

We next read (verses 14, 15), "the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him"—that is, when he had answered to the third call to

"separate from his father's house"—"Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever."

Abram having thus received the gift of the land from the Lord, we next read of him rising up as a powerful prince and bold commander, to protect its inhabitants from their enemies. It was his meet response to the Lord; as, although, through the wickedness of the Amorites not being full, he was not to enjoy immediate possession, he would nevertheless show himself fitted to receive the promised inheritance by marching against its invaders, and overthrowing them; and again, soon afterwards interceding for the people, when the Lord threatened them with destruction.

The narrative of this brilliant march of Abram brings us to the interview between him and Melchizedek. A few words describe it, and we might pass on, were it not that the Psalmist arrests our steps by telling us that our Lord "is a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek;" and afterwards we find, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Jew warned not to seek salvation through the sacrifices of the law, because of the saying of the Psalmist, and because that Abram acknowledged the priesthood of Melchizedek and paid him tithes.

I have already, on more than one occasion, remarked that the Gospel is revealed in Genesis in

veiled language. It is delivered, but enclosed in a mystery, and in marked contrast to the subsidiary temporal promises, which are so uttered that he who runs may read. It is emphatically so in the present case, we can see, for the Psalmist saw, and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews saw, but both could only say with S. Paul now, "we see through a glass darkly." It must be the same with us; some little insight is allowed to us, but we must at the same time be content to see figures pass before us which we cannot wholly distinguish.

In this case we have, (1) the positive statement of the Psalmist, "The Lord sware, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek;" and (2) the Commentary in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which is mainly directed to establish the imperfection of the Aaronic priesthood, and in contrast the perfection of that of our Lord.

With these passages to guide us, let us endeavour to ascertain the evangelical teaching of the meeting between Abram and Melchizedek. We are told that Melchizedek was a king and a priest; Abram was the same, a great chief and a priest; and the priesthood of both was of the same order, which we ordinarily speak of as the Patriarchal order. According to that order, the priestly office was neither hereditary nor traditory, but was the prerogative of every head of a house. Everyone who succeeded in establishing a house became at once its priest, and stood in that capacity between God and his household. Of

that priesthood, therefore, it could be said, it was without father, without mother, without descent, as it was not derivative.

For what reason, then, did Abram, priest and king, pay tithes to another priest and king of the same order? The narrative does not contain a word from which we can infer that Melchizedek possessed any measure of worldly power ; his greatness, as the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews indicates, was personal, due to the excellence of his character or to some spiritual prerogative attaching, in his particular case, to his priestly office. "Consider," the writer says, "how great this man was." In the patriarchal priesthood, however, there was no high priest possessed of special authority and power ; on the other hand, whilst the several priests would be co-equal, so far as their office was concerned, their dignity would vary with that of their house. When the several families in a nation or clan assembled together, the head of the nation would be acknowledged as the priest highest in dignity, would be for the time the priest of the whole nation, and might be described as the chief priest.

Was there, then, anything of this character in Melchizedek's position which moved Abram to regard him as his superior?

Let us consider. We are told that Melchizedek was priest of the *Most High God*, that is, he worshipped God as the "Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth ;" whilst Abram worshipped Him as the "Lord God," as we may feel sure did the whole family of

Shem from the time that Noah called over them that Name of Names, saying, "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem." Melchizedek therefore belonged not to the race of Shem, but to that of Ham; as we should also conclude from Salem being situated in Canaan—as all writers appear to be agreed upon so much, though opinions may be divided in regard to the exact locality of Salem—we may further conclude for the same reason that Melchizedek was a descendant of Canaan, as he was a king or chief in Canaan's principal possession. Salem, then, was a part of the land which the Almighty had solemnly given to Abram for an inheritance, and in the defence of which, as its lord, Abram had so signally exerted himself. Nevertheless, he sees in Melchizedek one superior to himself. How is this?

To understand this, we must bear in mind that God, Who always requires us to wait for Him, only by slow degrees brought about the complete fall of the race of Ham. It was still both very powerful and very influential in the days of Abram, at the same time it was decayed at the core—that is, if I am right in regarding Canaan as the eldest son of Ham. If so, the family, which should have been the head and heart of the race, had fallen very low, and its petty chiefs were servants, as we learn from history, even to the princes of their own race. The few devout amongst them, however, would remember that the representative of the eldest line of the family of Canaan was the natural head of their race, and as such

their chief priest. Was the petty king Melchizedek that person?

If he was, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews would not allude to that fact, as his purpose was to convince the Jewish Christians of the temporary character of the Aaronic priesthood, and in order to do that he would carefully avoid saying anything which should offend their jealous national feelings. He was able to accomplish his purpose, and leave Melchizedek enshrouded in mystery. I do not, however, consider this argument to be a full response to the exalted utterance of the Psalmist, "The Lord sware, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." We are told that these two expressions, "the Lord sware," and "will not repent," are nowhere, except in this place, found united. We have therefore here the strongest utterances which the Almighty has ever made to man. It seems to me therefore permissible, perhaps, to be required of us, to examine, so far as we can, what was special or peculiar to the priesthood of Melchizedek, that we may learn to what extent the Gospel of our salvation was unfolded to Abram on that occasion.

I feel myself that we stand on very sure ground, when we conclude that Ham was the firstborn of Noah; Canaan, again, his eldest son; and Melchizedek a descendant of Canaan; and as such Abram would acknowledge his superior dignity. For we are told that, as the sin of the Amorites was not yet full, Abram was not to enter at once upon his temporal

possession, and his obedient spirit would understand that, until their sin was full, he was not to assert any spiritual superiority over the priests, any more than any temporal authority over the land ; consequently, until Canaan was finally deposed, the priests of the race of Ham, as the eldest race, would hold the first place in dignity.

To some, however, it may seem that Abram might find a difficulty in deferring to Melchizedek, as he worshipped the Almighty as "the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth," and not as "the Lord God." We can readily understand that, when Noah called the Name of the Lord God over Shem, the eldest race would not willingly surrender their position, and would be moved to assert their superiority by worshipping the Almighty after the manner in which He first revealed Himself (see Genesis i.) as the Maker of heaven and earth. If this were so, it would naturally give rise to long and bitter controversies, for men were then such as they are now ; and we can well suppose that Abram, having received his call from the Lord God to be the channel through which the promised seed should arise, would make it his great work to heal the division, and to teach both that they worshipped the one and the same God. Note how careful he was to conjoin the two titles in his reply to the king of Sodom. It runs, "I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth." Abram, therefore, we may, I think, conclude, would find no

difficulty in deferring to Melchizedek because he worshipped God as "the Most High God." He may even, in his desire for unity, have been grateful for the opportunity of testifying that the children of Ham and the children of Shem worshipped together the one true and only God. Abram, therefore, may have felt that, in bending the knee before Melchizedek to be blessed by him, he was acting in patient submission to the will of God, who was delaying to give him actual possession of the land of Canaan. Lastly, as the prophet of God, he may have seen that in bending the knee before Melchizedek he was thereby teaching his own descendants that they must look forward to meet One greater than himself; One Whose kingdom, as the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews points out, would be Peace, and Who would Himself be, in the words of Jeremiah, "the Lord our Righteousness."

But, before concluding, I would like to put forth a conjecture, based in most part on the words of the Psalmist. All are agreed that Melchizedek was an important character in his generation, greatly exalted in dignity, notwithstanding that he was not politically great, probably much the reverse; his principality may have been one of the smallest in the land. May we not, then, conjecture that his importance arose from his being not simply a descendant of Canaan, but perhaps *the last representative of Canaan's eldest line?* If so, and if Canaan was the eldest son of Ham, and Ham the firstborn of Noah, to Melchizedek

would belong, by right of birth, the hegemony of the human race ; so that if it could have been gathered together, as it was when his sons stood around Noah, when he offered sacrifice on coming forth from the ark, Melchizedek would have been the chief priest, and would have offered sacrifice for the whole race of mankind. Well, then, could the Psalmist exclaim that our Lord, Who gave Himself a sacrifice for us all, was a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek ; and well could Abram rejoice to bow the knee, and be blessed by Melchizedek, and see by the light of faith in this act of his, the whole world gathered in the tent of Shem paying homage to Christ, the second Adam, the true Melchizedek, possessing for ever the hegemony of the human race, and standing for ever between God and man, presenting mankind continually to the Father as a righteous seed, endowed with everlasting life.

LECTURE V

*THE REVELATION OF THE WORD OF THE LORD
THAT FAITH SHOULD BE IMPUTED TO THE
BELIEVER FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS*

“And he believed in the Lord ; and He counted it to him for righteousness.”—GENESIS xv. 6.

I CLOSED my last lecture with an examination of the narrative of the meeting between Melchizedek and Abram. That is to be found at the close of chap. xiv. ; and the fifteenth opens thus, “After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision.” The words “after these things” are ordinarily regarded as referring to that momentous meeting which, however it be understood, is by all acknowledged to be a great corner-stone in the edifice, which the Almighty through the long ages was gradually raising to be the Temple in which salvation should abide for ever.

Doubtless those words “after these things” do refer to the actual meeting between these exalted characters ; to each of whom may be applied the words in the Epistle to the Hebrews, “Consider how

great this man was." For consider how exalted in honour must Melchizedek be, seeing that, through the ages of eternity, the humility of our Lord moves Him to be known, by all the hosts of angels and the vast company of the redeemed, not as a priest, who could have no fellow, *but as a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek*. The other, Abraham, is the Father of the faithful, and the Friend of God.

But, besides the immediate reference of these words to that meeting, I consider, from what follows, that they have a far larger and wider range. They appear to me to signify that that meeting closed a period in the world's history. That the blessing of Melchizedek transferred the hegemony of the race from himself to Abram ; and, further, that Abram and his seed, as the chosen people of God, were henceforth to stand in much closer relationship to the Almighty than had, before that hour, been allowed to fallen man ; that for them old things had passed away, and all things become new.

For we read, "the Word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt Thou give me, seeing I go childless?" We have read before that God spake unto Noah ; but after what manner we are not told ;—whether it was that Noah simply heard a voice, or whether God spoke to him through the medium of a dream, we cannot say. We can, however, conclude that, in receiving those communications,

Noah was not exalted to enter into the Presence of God, as it is not said that the Lord *appeared* to him.

Noah was conscious that it was the Lord Who spake, but at the same time realized that sinful man was not yet permitted to draw nigh unto God, and that he could only stand afar off. We draw this conclusion, because, previous to the occasion now under consideration, the Lord is described as speaking to Abram as He spake to Noah; the same form of words is used on every occasion, except on one, and that was, when, after Abram had entered Canaan (*vide* Genesis xii. 7), the Lord did not simply speak, but *appeared* unto Abram. We read, "the Lord *appeared* unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the Lord, Who *appeared* to him."

The statement, thus twice made, that on that occasion the Lord appeared to Abram, justifies the conclusion that there was no such appearance when the Lord is described as only speaking.

We must further draw attention to the fact that on no one occasion did either Noah or Abraham speak to God in return. They heard Him speak, and were silent, even when the Lord is said to have appeared to Abram.

We find, then, that both before and after the Flood, until the meeting between Melchizedek and Abram had taken place, man had from time to time been privileged to receive revelations from God, but, in giving them, the Almighty stood afar off,

and spoke only from the depths of His invisible Presence, except, in the one instance in which He appeared to Abram ; and in every case man was silent. Up to the period we are entering upon, there is no mention in the Book of God of man having ever addressed a prayer to the Almighty ; prayer, indeed, belongs to the new dispensation, which we are about to see inaugurated.

We can now proceed to the consideration of what is written in chap. xv. "After these things the Word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram ; I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward." How marvellously is all now changed ; now we see the beginning of the restoration of all things. Now the streams of peace are beginning to flow again from Paradise to water the Holy Land and the chosen people of God.

In Paradise the "Word of the Lord" had conversed with man, but never again, until the present hour, after sentence had been pronounced upon him on his fall from righteousness. What an hour was that, then, in the history of mankind ! What hymns of praise must have been sung by the angelic hosts, filling all heaven with their rejoicing music, when "the Word of the Lord" returns to man and "came to Abram" ! Mark it well : the Word of the Lord does not simply speak, nor appear only, but *He came to*, was present with Abram, and moreover *visibly*, for it is expressly said He came to him *in a vision*, that is, openly. And His first word was,

"Fear not, Abram." Adam and Eve had fled in *fear* from the presence of the Word of the Lord ; now, when He returns, His first Word is, "Fear not," I am not come to judge, but to be "thy exceeding great reward." I am not come to send thee from Me, but "to be thy shield."

The last words spoken to man by the Word of the Lord were, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return ;" and now He, Who is unchangeable, the same yesterday, to-day and for ever, comes to one of our fallen race and says, "I am thy exceeding great reward." Unless the Word of the Lord had so spoken, no one born of Adam could have conceived it possible that He should so speak. Oh, the depths of the riches of the mercy and love of God ! They are past finding out.

Tradition tells us that Abram, in obeying the call of the Lord, provoked the hostility of the world, and endured cruel and extreme persecution. The call and the response were not, to use the words of S. Paul, things done in a corner ; they were not hidden from the enemy of mankind. Before Abram could assume his place as head of the race of Shem, he had to meet the hostility of the eldest race, and perhaps the jealousy of many of his own.

We may accept the Jewish tradition so far, whatever may be the value of the details. For we now know that in the early ages of man's history his intellect was abundantly active, causing the intercourse between the different nations and families of the earth

to be very frequent. And, as man was then as he is now, we may feel sure that, in the midst of great activity of intellect, the passions of envy and jealousy did not lie dormant ; consequently we may, as I have said, accept these traditions as evidence that the call of Abram gave occasion to a great and widespread agitation, both civil and religious, throughout the East—that is, through the regions occupied by the rival races of Shem and Ham. The descendants of Japheth would not be affected, as the exaltation of Shem did not dispossess them. But the race of Ham would bitterly resent the advance of the house of Shem ; so that Abram could not be accepted as, by the call of God, heir to the great spiritual inheritance deposited in the tent of Shem, without passing through long and great tribulation.

And now we are to learn, not from tradition, but from Holy Scripture, aye, immediately from the “Word of the Lord,” how he bore himself through all.

“After these things”—which I understand to mean, after all that has occurred from the time of the call of Abram until Melchizedek, as chief priest of the race of Ham, blessed him—“After these things the Word of the Lord came to Abram ;” and He Who had said the thoughts of men’s hearts were but evil continually, now declared His acceptance of all that Abram had done and suffered, by saying, “I am thy exceeding great reward.”

There would appear to have followed a pause

after the Word of the Lord so spake to Abram. He may have swooned as did S. John afterwards. The father of the faithful would believe, but it would be difficult for his soul, fearing God, to realize all that was involved in the Word of the Lord appearing to him, and in the words which He spoke. It would seem from the text that the vision was for a time withdrawn, and Abram, when he had regained his strength, felt himself encouraged by the "Fear not, Abram," to pour forth a prayer to the Lord God. In praying to the Almighty as the Lord God, as He Whose purpose could not change, Abram showed that his faith in the truth of the promises of God did not fail, though his mind was perplexed. His prayer ended, the vision was renewed, as we read in verse 4, "Behold the word of the Lord came unto him," and promised him that "he that should come forth from his loins should be his heir."

Then it follows, "he" (Abram) "believed in the Lord, and it was counted to him for righteousness." And S. Paul adds, "Abram was as yet uncircumcised, when faith was counted to him for righteousness, that he might be the father of all them that believe, that righteousness might be imputed to them also." Thus, then, did the Word of the Lord, Who expelled our first parents from Paradise for unrighteousness, come to Abram, and reveal His purpose of mercy to him, and to all who with him would believe, *to account their faith for righteousness*. The world was undisturbed on the night of the Birth of Christ; a few faithful

alone knew of it ; so, in the case before us, the revelation of *salvation through faith* is made to one only, and in a few words, and to the full meaning of which the Saints of God have only slowly arrived by prayer and diligent study of the sacred Scriptures.

Nevertheless, next to the Birth of Christ, we may regard the revelation by the Word of the Lord of salvation through the righteousness of faith, as constituting the greatest epoch in the history of mankind. Up to that hour man had lived under the dispensation of righteousness. Noah is spoken of in the Book of God "as a just man, and perfect in his generation ;" but his manner of life is not described in detail, so that we might learn therefrom to walk in his steps.

To what height of righteousness and measure of perfection Noah and Shem and others attained, we do not know. They pass before us, but in the dim distance we cannot delineate them. But now all is changed ; even the Book of Genesis completely changes its character at this point ; the remainder of the book is almost entirely taken up with putting before us the manner of life of the chosen of God, of Abraham himself, of Isaac and Jacob, and Joseph and the other sons of Israel.

Why is this ? The explanation seems to be that, with the bestowal of the dispensation of salvation through faith, the Lord God began that course of discipline which would gradually awaken in His chosen servants a sense of sin, and ultimately lead

them to come before Him in the spirit of true repentance ; and it is to the exercise and working of this discipline that, through the remainder of the book, our attention is called. It was necessary, as S. Paul tells us, that those who would be saved through faith should be convinced of the righteousness of God. Therefore at this epoch the Lord God commenced to train men's characters by a severe discipline ; that by suffering they might be led to know that, whilst God is mercy, He is also Holiness, and that there is an obedience to His Will, which must be found in all who would be saved through faith. Hence it is for our instruction that the trial of the obedience of Abraham is recorded.

We will again proceed, and I will begin with remarking (1) that the order hitherto observed, of the temporal or earthly blessing being first bestowed and then the spiritual, is again followed ; (2) the temporal blessing is again drawn out in detail, whilst the spiritual is revealed only in enigma or in a mystery ; (3) the temporal is not distinct from, but subsidiary and intimately connected with, the spiritual blessing.

In the fifteenth chapter the Lord renews the gift of the land of Canaan to Abram and his seed ; and, as a friend speaking with his friend, the Word of the Lord gives to Abram an outline of the history of his descendants.

He also assures him that he shall not continue to be childless, but that a son shall be born to him, who shall be his heir. But in all that is said on this

occasion, no mention is made of that seed, in whom all the earth shall be blessed, that is, of the spiritual promise of everlasting life.

The question may be asked why, if the temporal blessing only is referred to, the Almighty is not spoken of as God only, instead of, as is the case, the Lord God. As we read He was styled God, and God only, when "God blessed Noah and his sons, and said, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth," etc.

Is not the explanation this? Although the land of Canaan was given to the children of Israel for a possession, it was not given to them in freehold, after the manner in which the earth was divided amongst the sons of Noah and their families. God emphatically declared, when He gave to Israel its law, "the land is Mine, for ye are strangers and sojourners with Me." It was given them for a purpose most holy, that the sacred line, from which should be born the Deliverer of mankind from the bondage of sin and death, might have a home, wherein It might be nourished and gradually fitted for the great end for which It was formed. Therefore, to show to Abram and his descendants from the first that the land was given to them, not for their own sakes, but in order that they might be in a special manner fellow-workers with God, the Almighty is spoken of by that Name which we have seen is always used in connection with the promise of redemption.

In the next chapter—the sixteenth—we enter upon

the narrative of the discipline by which the Almighty trained His chosen people, that they might be the inheritors of the righteousness which is of faith. Most instructive as it would be to examine closely into all that is there set before us, such an examination would lie somewhat outside the purpose which I set before me in preparing these lectures, and to that purpose I must, as much as possible, confine myself.

It concerns my subject, however, to notice that we are told in this chapter that "an angel of the Lord" met Hagar, when she fled from the face of Sarah into the wilderness; whilst in the twenty-first chapter we read, when Hagar was again in the wilderness with her son, "the angel of God" called to her out of heaven. The explanation of this difference of style lies on the surface. In the first instance, Hagar was a fugitive slave, not a free woman, and, as Abram's slave, she was a partaker in the covenant the Almighty had made with Abram, and all that were born in his house, or bought with his money; therefore, it was the "angel of the Lord" who appeared to her and ordered her to return. In the latter case she had received her freedom from Abram, and had no longer any part in him; she had been absolutely dismissed; therefore when the angel calls to her out of heaven, he does it as to one outside of the covenant, and is styled the "angel of God."

We pass on now to the seventeenth chapter, which elucidates my thesis with singular clearness and force.

We read, "the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God ; walk before Me, and be thou perfect. And I will make My covenant between Me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face : and God talked with him, saying, As for Me, behold, My covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations."

What is the meaning of the Lord at this stage saying, "I am the Almighty God?" It appears to me to be this. The covenant here spoken of is plainly the temporal covenant ; but in regard to that we have already seen that the land of Canaan was not given to Abram and his seed in freehold, so far as God is concerned, as He continued to speak of the land as "Mine," and laid down numerous and minute laws under which it should be holden. We saw further, in order to mark this special character of the gift, the Almighty, when making the grant, was styled "the Lord God," thereby showing, as I have urged, that His special purpose was to provide a home for the sacred line from which the Deliverer should come forth.

But, in thus uniting together the temporal with the spiritual promise, the Israelite in after times would be tempted to regard the temporal as an integral part of the spiritual inheritance, as we find was the case in the days of the Apostles, when the Jew demanded that the Gentile convert should be circumcised. To meet this danger, the Lord, when

He appeared to Abram, said, "I am the Almighty God"—that is, I am not now about to speak to you of the spiritual Promise, but of that which belongs to the earth—therefore I style Myself "Almighty God," that your posterity may not claim as of right, on the ground of being circumcised, and possessed of the land of Canaan, a part in the spiritual inheritance.

In adding "walk before Me and be thou perfect," the Lord seems in regard to the covenant of circumcision to remove Abram and his seed out of the dispensation of faith, and to place them back under the law of righteousness. Everlasting life would be bestowed on those who attained to the righteousness of faith, whereas the title to the possession of the land of Canaan was settled on *obedience to the law*. What a strong light is in this way thrown upon the argument of S. Paul in his epistles to the Romans and Galatians.

Towards the end of this chapter "God" promises Abraham that Sarah shall "bear a son, and that she shall be the mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her." Temporal blessings—blessings of this life—are thus largely bestowed on her; whilst at this time nothing is said of her being the mother of Him Who should bruise the serpent's head.

To keep this latter markedly distinct from the former, and to set forth the singular exaltation attaching to it, the Lord, as we read in the following chapter—the eighteenth, appeared to Abraham in that

Form of mysterious Majesty which the Church, we may conclude, regards as the greatest of the Theophanies, as she directs this chapter to be read yearly on the Festival of the Ever-blessed Trinity.

On this occasion the Almighty is spoken of as the Lord, and not as God, as in the former chapter ; thereby we know that what is here said has reference to the accomplishment of the purpose of God in creating man, and which purpose, He revealed at the fall, He would accomplish through the seed of the woman. "God" had already promised Sarah a son, adding particulars, that she should be the mother of nations, etc.—after His ordinary way when promising temporal gifts. But now, and that almost immediately after the former appearance of the Almighty, there follows this greater and most mysterious Theophany, and "the Lord" says, "Lo, Sarah, thy wife, shall have a son," and adds no more. What should result from the gift of that son is left to be realized by faith in the "Lord God ;" she was to understand by faith that that son was to be, if not in his own person the seed which the "Lord God" had promised, yet certainly the progenitor of that seed.

This chapter concludes with the earnest pleading of Abraham that Sodom and Gomorrah might be spared. I have already observed that, in the narrative of the destruction of the old world, the Almighty is styled God only, not the Lord God, the unchangeable I Am, Whose purpose could not fail, but must

that consequently He would deliver him. We are indeed told in the Epistle to the Hebrews that Abraham did in this his hour of trial find support in that conviction ; but what I am pointing out is, that his faith was not helped by the temptation coming from the "Lord." Moreover, throughout the journey, even until he had bound his son upon the wood, Abraham could not find support by speaking of the Lord. In answer to his son's question, he could only reply, "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt-offering." At length they arrive at the place, which "God" had told him of ; there was no relief until he had bound Isaac, and taken the knife to slay him ; then instantly all is changed, the angel of *the Lord*, the Lord of deliverance, the Lord of salvation, calls to him out of heaven, and confirms His words by an oath, that by two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might be assured of the immutability of His counsel towards us.

And what was it the Lord so promised ?

(a) That He would multiply the seed of Abraham as the stars of heaven.

(b) That in his seed should all the nations of the earth be blessed.

But had not the Lord, Who cannot lie, promised both these things before ? Had He not already confirmed the Promise by repeating it ? Why, then, now confirm it by an oath ?

Had Abraham doubted ? Rather had he not given proof of his faith under the extremest of trials.

Why, then, is this Promise now so strenuously and so solemnly renewed? Mark the opening words, "Because thou hast done this thing." Abraham had been called out of Ur, and the Promise that of him should come the Redeemer had been made in reward to his *faith*; but now the Lord looks upon his *obedience* as perfect. And because he was found perfect in obedience, God, Who had so often been made to grieve by the disobedience of man, and to repent that He had made man, now rejoices that He had found one who would do His Will; and in the fulness of joy declares with an oath that He Who should restore to man his inheritance of everlasting life by fulfilling, in the likeness of man, all the whole Will of the Father, should come forth from the loins of obedient Abraham.

Well could S. Paul speak of the faith, and S. James of the obedience of Abraham. And all along, methinks, as we have followed Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees, we must have felt ourselves in the presence of one who in spiritual majesty and greatness stood alone amongst the sons of men. True, he is with us one of the fallen race of Adam, but nevertheless the call which he received from God so raised him up into His Presence, that he seems by that exaltation to have been separated from his fellows. On earth he was the Friend of God, and father of the faithful; in Paradise it was in his bosom that the faithful rested, waiting for the coming of the Lord.

We have no further mention of any meeting of

the Almighty with Abraham. The remainder of the narrative is principally occupied with the death of Sarah and the marriage of Isaac, and it is with the latter only our subject is concerned.

After Sarah's death, Abraham, being now old, is anxious to arrange for the marriage of Isaac; he accordingly summons his steward, and requires him to swear by the "Lord" to carry out faithfully the instructions he was about to give him. But it is not simply by the Lord the steward has to swear, but by "the Lord, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth." Why so? Surely for this reason: The steward was to go amongst strangers, some of whom might be worshipping false gods; so, in making him swear by "the Lord, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth," Abraham enforces upon the steward that the Lord, whom he worshipped in Abraham's house, was not one among many gods—the God of Abraham's family only—but the one true and only God. The steward was faithful to his trust, and in his prayer and in his conversation with Laban always styles the Almighty the Lord God; and brings Rebekah to Isaac to be his wife, and the mother of Him Who in the fulness of time should bruise the serpent's head.

Here the Gospel as enfolded in Genesis closes. We have seen—

- I. (a) Everlasting life pledged to men by the Almighty by His styling Himself, when creating man, the Lord God, the un-

changeable I Am, Whose purpose can neither change nor fail.

(b) The pledge renewed to Noah, when the Lord declared the days of man should yet be 120 years.

2. Deliverance from sin and death promised at the Fall through an Incarnate Deliverer.

3. All the descendants of Noah included in that redemption.

(a) By Noah securing a place within the tent of Shem to all his race, whether sprung from Shem, Ham, or Japheth.

(b) By the Almighty, when chastening man after the Flood, *e.g.* the dispersion at Babel, styling Himself the Lord God, Whose purpose towards man cannot change.

(c) By the Promise to Abraham that in his seed should *all the nations* of the earth be blessed.

4. The reckoning of faith to Abraham for righteousness, and to all who walk in the steps of that faith of Abraham.

5. The commencement of the work of intercession for sinners, consequent upon the revelation that God would justify the ungodly through faith.

6. In the obedience required of Abraham, we have revealed the stern severity of the Gospel demands for holiness, in thought, word, and deed, on the part of the sons of God.

The remainder of the book is taken up with setting before us the discipline with which, from the first, under the dispensation of righteousness through faith, the Lord God began to train the chosen seed.

And here we find again introduced the principle of election, which, although we met with it before the destruction of the old world in the election of the family of Seth, and, so far as we can see, in the rejection of that of Cain, is so carefully excluded in connection with the descendants of Noah. Now, however, we are brought face to face with an election of a very marked character, so sharp, so decisive, that S. Paul, quoting Malachi speaking in the Name of the Lord, says of the children of Isaac, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."

In studying this election, we must be careful to bear in mind that it cannot supersede the blessing of Noah, which extended to all his race, and secured to all who will dwell in the tent of Shem an inheritance of everlasting life. This was pledged to them by Noah, as the prophet of God, by his designating the Almighty by the Name by which He expressed His unchangeable purpose when He created man in His own Image. From the tent of Shem none are to be excluded who will enter in.

The election, then, which we are now considering, must be understood in relation to the promises made to Abraham, (1) that his seed should possess the land of Canaan, (2) that from his seed should arise the Deliverer, Who should bruise the serpent's head.

We may confine ourselves to the consideration of the second promise, as I have previously explained that the first is but subsidiary to the second. It is a temporal promise attending upon and ministering to the great spiritual promise. Looking, then, at the second, that is, at the sacred line in which, through many generations, was to be formed that character which should fit the Blessed Virgin to be the Mother of our Lord, we can understand how one in any generation would be preferred to another, according as his character, or some particular feature therein, would best contribute to the furtherance of the great and holy end for which he was chosen.

In the last chapters of Genesis we read of Jacob and Judah being chosen ; after that the line is kept hidden from view until it is brought into the light in the person of David, only, however, to be again concealed ; as it was not made known through which of his descendants the sacred line was passing, until S. Joseph and the Virgin Mother went up to be enrolled at Bethlehem.

Now let us consider the case of Jacob. The Lord marks His choice of Jacob with great emphasis and with most expressive symbolism ; (1) When he fled from the face of his brother Esau, the Lord met him at Bethel, and solemnly confirmed both promises to him in the very words which He had used in making them to Abraham. It is, however, to be noticed that whilst the Lord appeared to Abraham in a vision, He came to Jacob only in a dream of the night.

(2) The second occasion on which the Lord testified to His having chosen Jacob was on his return from Syria to Canaan, and is there thus described (see Genesis xxxii. 24-29): "And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the break of the day . . . And He said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me. And he said unto Him, What is Thy name? . . . And He said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a Prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed."

Now, the life of Jacob is somewhat fully drawn out in the Book of Genesis, and the various incidents related have not the effect of making him prevail with the ordinary reader; that setting, however, serves to bring out into stronger light the particular feature in his character for which he was chosen that the sacred line should pass through him.

The Blessed Virgin, in her hymn of thanksgiving, rested her exaltation on her humility and meekness; and through the mists rising from his earthly nature, which surround Jacob, we are able to discern in him meekness of spirit. It is as if his meekness had in it life, and had lived on, showing itself again in David, who never revenged a wrong done to himself; whilst the weaknesses and infirmities of Jacob—possessing but a feeble vitality—fell off from him as the decaying branches of a pine tree. The character of Jacob, and the discipline to which it was subjected, should be carefully studied.

Jacob had twelve sons ; we learn something of all of them, but the two whose portraits are most fully drawn are Judah and Joseph. And here again, as in the case of Esau and Jacob, the choice of God is not the choice of man. Judah was the one whom God chose to be the ancestor of our Lord ; whilst we cannot doubt but that Jacob, and with him many of succeeding generations, have in their hearts preferred Joseph to that exalted position. It is an important inquiry for everyone to make, why, when the Almighty puts before us so much that is excellent in Joseph, and constantly assures us that "the Lord" was with him, and made him to prosper, He nevertheless did not choose him, but chose Judah. Notwithstanding many weaknesses, Jacob was chosen, whilst notwithstanding many excellences, Joseph was passed by. Truly we have much to learn, if we would see as God seeth. Here I will conclude this lecture, and in the next resume the study of the discipline of the Lord God by which He educated His chosen people, so far as it is set before us in the remaining chapters of the Book of Genesis.

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LECTURE VI

THE DISCIPLINARY TRAINING OF JACOB, AS REPRESENTATIVE OF THOSE WHO HEREAFTER SHOULD BE SAVED BY FAITH

"Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel : for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed."—GENESIS xxxii. 28.

WE are now no more occupied with any Revelation or Promise of the Almighty to man ; but are in the presence of that discipline with which the Lord God began to educate His chosen people after establishing with Abraham His Covenant, wherein faith was counted to man for righteousness. Then began a discipline by means of which the soul was awakened gradually to a consciousness of sin, and was moved to make confession thereof. In brief, the soul was by slow degrees taught to repent, and to seek reconciliation with God through repentance ; for repentance is the firstborn child of faith.

But in studying the disciplinary action of the Almighty, as set before us in the Book of Genesis, we must be most careful to remember that, whilst

such study brings before us the weaknesses and infirmities of man, it also shows us their acceptance with God, and so warns us not to venture upon judging those to whom the light came from without, and did not shine upon them from within, as with us. We can only read what is written as learners, and try to see how, in the way of salvation the Lord established with Abraham, "mercy and truth have met together ; righteousness and peace have kissed each other ;" but the most prolonged study still leaves us learning.

After reading the narrative of the death of Abraham, as given in chap. xxv., we have placed before us a picture of the domestic life of Isaac. From it we find that he and Rebekah were regular worshippers of the Lord, and put their trust in Him for guidance and protection. As in verse 21 we read, "Isaac entreated the Lord for his wife, because she was barren ; and the Lord was entreated of him." And again in verse 22, when Rebekah was in suffering, she also went to inquire of the Lord, and we are told the Lord answered her ; though after what manner is not stated. Again, later on (see chap. xxvi. 28), when Abimelech, with his chief captain, came to Isaac, they said, "We saw certainly that the Lord was with thee ;" thus, as it seems to me, showing that they knew well the manner of Isaac's life, and that he with his household worshipped God as "the Lord." Abimelech himself, being a Canaanitish chief, would probably worship

God as the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth.

It is a pleasant picture of a home in which piety and trust in God prevailed. After many years twins were granted to their prayers ; they had probably learned from Abraham to have faith in God, and to wait for Him. By means of these twins the Lord, I conceive, from the first, taught the seed of Abraham that the election, of which they afterwards boasted, was *based on character*. The Jews said to our Lord, " We be Abraham's children ; " when He replied, " If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham." That is, ye must possess the character of Abraham, if you would inherit spiritual promises made to him.

Afterwards S. Paul, when arguing that the election of grace was not one of inheritance, referred back to the election of Jacob, and rejection of Esau. They were not only children of the same father and mother, but even twins, and therefore coheirs, if the election were of inheritance, but it was of character ; so Jacob was taken and Esau left. True, God had said that the seed of Abraham should be as the sand of the sea for multitude, and they became in consequence a great multitude, but a rebellious one. God, however, overruled their evil to serve His own ends. They were not cast off, in order that in the midst of them the sacred line, and those who ministered to it, might be concealed from Satan and the world, until the hour of man's deliverance should arrive. Then at

the last was it fully seen that the election was of character, as all, but the remnant that believed in Christ, were rejected.

Thus from the first did the discipline of the Lord draw man's attention to character.

After some years—for it was after Jacob had obtained the birthright from Esau—the Lord, as we read in chap. xxvi. 2, 3, 4, appeared to Isaac, and renewed with him the promise He had made to Abraham, and in the selfsame words. As this did not take place until many years after Abraham's death, it leaves us to consider whether we can discover any reason why this particular time was chosen for such solemn renewal of the covenant.

In the preceding chapter we are told that Isaac loved Esau, and Rebekah loved Jacob. This preference of one son to the other may have led Isaac and Rebekah to discuss between themselves how the great inheritance they inherited from Abraham should be transmitted; and such discussions may have inspired Jacob with the desire to secure it to himself. The Lord God, therefore, by appearing to Isaac, and making the Promise to him as He made it to Abraham, showed him that, though he may have inherited cattle and silver and gold from his father, the Lord God would Himself choose that seed of Abraham, in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed.

How far the family was influenced, even for a time, by the Lord thus appearing to Isaac, we are not told. But it is instructive to notice that, as it took

place, according to the sacred narrative, after Jacob had purchased the supposed birthright, so the last appearance of the Lord, in connection with the great Promise, was to Jacob himself, after he had contrived to secure to himself the blessing of the eldest son. May we not infer from this that the purpose of the Lord, on both occasions, was to discourage ambition, and to help Jacob to realize that the blessing of Abraham was to be held immediately of the Lord, Who would give it to whom He would, and that it was to be held, as Jacob plainly realized at Bethel, on the tenure of faithful service?

But to return; we find the household of Isaac in his old age, as in his earlier days, worshipping the Lord. For we read that when, in expectation of his death drawing nigh, he proposed to bless his son, he said to Esau, "Bring me venison, that I may bless thee *before the Lord*;" and when Jacob appeared before him, he accounted for having found the venison so quickly by saying, "Because *the Lord thy God* brought it to me." This reads as the language of those who habitually served the Lord; and, therefore, what follows deserves to be carefully considered.

We find Isaac, in giving his blessing, makes no mention of either the temporal or spiritual blessing bestowed on Abraham and himself; his words contain no reference either to the gift of the land of Canaan, or to all the nations of the earth being blessed in his seed. Does not this support my conjecture that Isaac understood, from the Lord

appearing to him and renewing the two promises, the temporal and the spiritual, with him personally, that the Lord reserved these gifts in His own Hands, to bestow them on the seed of Abraham as He would? Or, to use the language of S. Paul when explaining the tenure by which the children of Israel held of God, "Neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all chosen; but in Isaac shall thy seed be called." That is, "they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the Promise are counted for the seed."

Further, the language in which Isaac bestows his blessing supports this explanation. He begins by saying, "The smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed," but at once checks himself, and goes on to give the blessing in the Name of God, not of the Lord God, thereby showing that the blessing lay outside of the Covenant the Lord had made with Abraham.

When, however, he afterwards sends Jacob away and in the manner of a father bestows his parting blessing on his son, Isaac seems to have been inspired to go beyond what he had invoked of God for Jacob, when he had given him his formal blessing as his supposed eldest son, and said, "God Almighty bless thee, and give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee, that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham." But here, again, he did not depart from the rule which we have seen always

observed in Genesis, so, as he refers only to the temporal blessing, he does not speak of God as the Lord, but simply as Almighty God.

It is important, however, to notice that Isaac, in thus parting with Jacob, appears to have regarded him as the heir of the Promise to Abraham. Can we explain this? In all probability Isaac heard through Rebekah of Esau's threat to slay Jacob, and, as a devout man, fearing the Lord, would have realized that, in consequence of that intention, he could not be the elect of God. Cain used violence, and went out from the Lord; could Esau threaten violence, and be accepted by Him? The great charge against the old world was, "that the earth was filled with violence through them; therefore, said God, I will destroy them with the earth." Could He then give Canaan to a son of violence? We must bear in mind that men were not in the patriarchal age without law. We have in chap. ix. the laws promulgated by the Almighty; and the tradition of the Jews has preserved to us what they designated the Noachian precepts; and although there was not yet developed in the souls of men a consciousness of sin which could lead them to repentance, and through repentance to reconciliation with God, they had a sense of guilt, and knowledge that their guilt would draw down upon them the judgments of the Almighty.

Jacob now leaves his father's house; and the remaining chapters of the Book of Genesis are occupied

with setting before us the discipline with which the Lord God trained his character. We have put before us His acceptance of Jacob for his meekness—that meekness which he was to transmit through a long line of descendants, until it opened out in a perfect flower in the person of the Ever-blessed Virgin;—we are also shown how the Almighty constantly watched over His son whom He had chosen, and also how He chastised him with lifelong chastisements.

I do not know that we can anywhere meet with a more harrowing tale than this in Genesis. Having given way to deception, deceit follows Jacob's steps to the last, never leaving him. He is deceived by everyone, whether they be strangers, or his relatives, or his children. He can find no door of escape, and at last the deceit which his best-beloved son used towards his brethren to humble them, wellnigh, according to his own heartbreaking confession, brought his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.

But in all this there is mercy; the Lord God was separating the chaff from the wheat; it was the discipline by which he educated His beloved son, so beloved that God willed that for all future ages He should be known as the God of Jacob. We must now proceed to follow it out, and endeavour to be ourselves instructed by it.

As I have already spoken of the Lord, the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac, appearing in a dream to Jacob at Bethel, and confirming to him the Promise He had made to Abraham and to Isaac, I

may pass to the consideration of Jacob's marriage, and of his relations through many years to his father-in-law Laban. In order to form a correct estimate of the discipline connected with Jacob's stay in Syria, it is important to show at the outset that Jacob distinctly acknowledged that Leah, whom he did not love, was his God-given or lawful wife, and that Rachel was not such, but only the wife of his own will. The evidence of this is to be found in Jacob's directions to his sons as he was dying. In chap. xlix. 29-31, we read, "he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite for a possession of a burying-place. There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah."

This last clause, "there they buried Abraham, etc.," was not required in giving his directions; they seem to have been drawn from Jacob to testify on his dying bed that Leah, though never beloved, was his true and lawful wife. This is corroborated by what Jacob said to Joseph when he visited him on his deathbed. "As for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan, in the way when there was but a little way to come unto Ephrath; and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath."

The writer adds, "the same is Bethlehem," therefore not far from Hebron and the cave of Machpelah. But note, Jacob does not excuse himself to Joseph for not having buried his mother in the sacred sepulchre ; nor, though about to order that he himself should be buried there, does he direct her son to remove her remains to Machpelah, that she might lie by his side, and along with Sarah and Rebekah. It must have been a blow to Joseph to find his brethren's mother preferred above his own. But the mother of Judah, the ancestor of our Lord, could be buried in no other sepulchre.

Let us turn now to chap. xxix. ; there we read, verse 31 to end, "When the Lord saw that Leah was hated, He opened her womb ;" and when Reuben was born, she said, "Surely the Lord hath looked upon my affliction ; now therefore my husband will love me." When the second child was born, she said, "Because the Lord hath heard that I was hated, He hath given me this child also ;" and at the birth of Judah she exclaimed, "Now will I praise the Lord." But when the two handmaids bore children to Jacob, neither Leah nor Rachel ventured to ascribe them to the Lord, but spoke of them as the offspring of the temporal blessing to increase and to multiply, by speaking of them as given by God. But the important point to note is, that it was the same with Rachel, who after many years bore Joseph. We read, "God"—not "the Lord," as in the case of Leah—"remembered Rachel," and "God"—not "the Lord"—

"hearkened to her ;" and when the child was born, she said, "God hath taken away my reproach ;" and then in the fulness of her joy, which quickened her hope, she pointedly added, "The Lord shall add to me another son ;" that other son was born, but was named by her Benoni, the son of my sorrow.

It is further noticeable that after Leah had adopted means of her own will to increase her family by giving her handmaid to Jacob, when she herself again bore children, she was afraid to attribute them to the "Lord," and could only say, "God hath given me my hire . . . God hath endued me with a good dowry."

I can myself have no difficulty in concluding from the Almighty being spoken of as "the Lord," when He visited Leah, and from Leah giving "the Lord" thanks when her first children were born, and from the Almighty, in marked contrast, being styled "God" only in the case of Rachel, that the house of Jacob—that is, himself and Leah, and Rachel—knew that Leah was the God-given wife, and that Rachel was not. And when we remember how frequently we are told that Jacob did not love Leah, we can draw but the one conclusion from Jacob burying Leah in the cave of Machpelah and not Rachel—that he knew that Rachel, though beloved by him, was not his wife, and that Leah was.

I can understand, however, that some may hesitate so to read the passages to which I have referred, through their looking upon Leah as forced upon

Jacob. We may say to such, was she? though there is really no need to enter upon that point; we need not go beyond what is written. But in Genesis xxix. 23, we have recorded certain facts without any explanation being attached;—explanations are rarely to be met with in the Bible; we have to search into it to discover its meaning. Now, it is plain that Leah could not have been dressed, and adorned, and carried in procession to Jacob's tent, and not Rachel, without Rachel being privy to it; or, if we suppose Laban used force to compel her to submission, her maids, whose jealousy and anger would have been aroused to the utmost at the wrong being done to their beautiful mistress, would have contrived to give Jacob and his attendants warning. But whatever happened, Jacob accepted Leah. We may perhaps infer from what is written that Jacob, who was a fugitive from Canaan on account of having supplanted his elder brother, was stung by the bitter sarcasm of Laban, when he replied to Jacob's remonstrance, "It must not be so done in our country, to give the younger before the elder," and that he then meekly submitted to the punishment which he discerned God was inflicting upon him, and accepted Leah as the wife given him by God. Thus did the discipline by which he was being educated reprove his craftiness and exercise his meekness.

After this, Jacob proposed to return to Canaan, but consented to remain. On this occasion both Jacob and Laban, in speaking of the Almighty, styled Him

"the Lord," showing that Jacob continued to worship God as the Lord : and probably Laban also, as he was of the family of Shem.

After some years, during which Jacob had adopted various contrivances to secure to himself a large proportion of the stock, and Laban, as Jacob afterwards complained, had changed his wages, speaking generally, ten times, the Lord, Who had promised at Bethel "to be with him, and to keep him in all places whither he went and to bring him again to Canaan," directed Jacob to return unto the land of his fathers, and to his kindred, adding, "and I will be with thee." Note the loving care of the Lord, as, besides his father, who was Jacob's kindred but Esau? And the Lord inspired him with confidence to meet his brother by saying, "I will be with thee."

Having received this command, Jacob calls Rachel and Leah to him ; and, when speaking to them, styles the Almighty "God," and not the "Lord." It is the same when Laban overtook Jacob, both abstain from speaking of "God" as the "Lord," though both had done so, when they first contracted with each other. Does this show that Jacob realized that, in planning artfully to increase his cattle, he had not trusted sufficiently in the Promise of the Lord to be with him, and again had shown himself weak in faith by stealing away secretly from Laban when the Lord ordered him to return to Canaan? Consequently, he feared to speak of Him by His covenanted title, and spoke of Him as God only.

During those twenty years' sojourn in Syria, we find that Jacob was without cessation chastised by being the victim of the deceitfulness of others ; he was thus taught by a severe experience the wickedness of deceit. At the same time, we see how difficult it was for man, until his soul had been taught to repent, to raise his own character. We notice, however, that after Jacob's return to Canaan he is simply the victim of the deceitfulness of others ; his own life after that was one of patient suffering. It may therefore be that the Lord, Who had watched over him, was satisfied at the end of Jacob's twenty years of service, and accordingly directed him to return to Canaan. We seem to be justified in coming to that conclusion from the Angel of the Lord with Whom Jacob wrestled on the borders of Canaan, saying to him, "As a prince hast thou power with God and with man, and hast prevailed." He had not prevailed with those readers of these chapters who have regard only to Jacob's craftiness ; but, amidst the dark cloud of deceit which surrounded his steps, we can still discern in him a meek character, and it was upon this that the Lord worked, and told him that the meek spirit had power both with man and with God. He so prevailed with God that he was chosen to be the progenitor of her who for her lowliness of spirit was exalted to be the Mother of our Lord.

At the entrance to Canaan Esau met Jacob. Though he was returning by the command of the "Lord," Who had promised to be with him, Jacob

was alarmed when he heard his brother was coming to meet him. In contrast to that we read in chap. xxxiii. 4, "Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him; and they wept." Thus the advance, and that one of warm brotherly affection, was made by Esau. Afterwards also, when Esau and Jacob had buried Isaac, we find, from chap. xxxvi. 6-9, that Esau took "all his substance which he had got in the land of Canaan, and went into the country from the face of his brother Jacob; for their riches were more than they might dwell together." Thus Esau, without murmuring, surrendered to Jacob the position of the elder brother.

All this is not written of Esau without a purpose. It shows us that he had an affectionate spirit, which could forgive injuries; but it perhaps also indicates that he was a man who lived for the present hour, and had not sufficient depth of character to enter into the deep purposes of God, and therefore was not chosen. Nevertheless the names of his descendants are recorded in the Book of God, thereby certifying us that, though not elected to inherit the great promise made to Abraham and Isaac—in respect of which S. Paul tells us in strong language he was rejected—he and those born of him were still before God, and were abundantly blessed. The promise to Sarah that she should be the mother of nations, and kings of people should be of her, received an accomplishment in Esau. And we may earnestly hope that

the affection with which he embraced Jacob will secure him a portion in that salvation of which Jacob was to be the progenitor ; that embrace surely made him a partaker in all that belonged to his brother.

It should, however, at the same time be pointed out that, from what we read, Esau does not appear to have been made the subject of that discipline with which the Lord began to train those descendants of Abraham who were to be accounted righteous through faith. We call to mind what Jacob afterwards said to his son Reuben, Esau's nephew : " Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel." There was not, perhaps, in Esau's character sufficient persistence to serve as a foundation on which discipline could work.

But to return to Jacob. We are told that, on re-entering Canaan, he sojourned first at Shechem, the spot where Abraham pitched his first camp ; and further, that with Abraham, Jacob also built an altar there, but called it " El-elohe-Israel," whereas Abraham is said " to have built an altar to the Lord." The note in the Speaker's Commentary on this change of inscription is pleasing. It is as follows : " Jacob had hitherto always spoken of Jehovah as the God of Abraham, and the God or the Fear of his father Isaac. Now on his gracious acceptance by Him, his change of name by His appointment, his return to Canaan as the heir of the land, he calls Him his own God, El, the God of Israel."

During Jacob's sojourn at Shechem his sons acted deceitfully towards the sons of Hamor ; and we read,

chap. xxxiv. 25, "on the third day that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, took each his sword, and came upon the city boldly, and slew all the males;" and from verse 27 it appears that their brethren afterwards took part with the two in despoiling the city. They therefore involved themselves in the guilt of Simeon and Levi.

I have two comments to make upon this painful incident. (1) That Jacob, in rebuking Simeon and Levi, speaks only of the *temporal consequences* and not of the sinfulness of his sons' acts; he utters no word calling on them to repent of their sin, and to confess it before God, that He might cleanse them from their iniquities. Nor is there any such word in his language towards them on his death-bed. Jacob in vehement terms separates himself from giving any consent to their deed; but repentance, which affects a change of character, was as yet unknown even to those who served God, and were beloved by Him. So the Patriarch concludes by simply dividing them in Israel that they might not again combine to work wickedness.

But (2) although men as yet knew not of repentance, God had already begun that long course of discipline by which He, slowly but surely, educated His chosen servants to see that evil deeds were not only wrongs done to others, but were sins against Himself. In that way He prepared them to receive that priceless, inestimable gift of repentance, by which the sinner against God might be reconciled to Him.

We find, therefore, the Almighty at once directing His discipline to teach the sons of Jacob that their act of violence had altered their relations to Him, and not theirs only, but their father's also, who in meekness remained with his sons to suffer with them. We find that, whilst it was "the Lord God" Who directed Jacob to return to Canaan, the Lord God, the unchangeable I Am, Who had covenanted with Abraham that in his seed should all the nations of the earth be blessed, and Who assured them that He was ever mindful of His covenant by appearing to them as the Lord God, henceforth the Almighty is not known to the house of Jacob, in which violence dwelt, as "the Lord God;" to Jacob's dying day He is known to him simply as "God."

I have already observed that Cain was cast out for his violence; that the old world was sentenced to destruction for its violence; and I adduced therefrom that, when Isaac in parting with Jacob spoke of him as the inheritor of the covenanted Promise, he did so because he realized that Esau's violence excluded him from the inheritance. The unchangeable Lord God, therefore, would not overlook the violence of Simeon and Levi; He accordingly placed for a season the house of Jacob, in which they abode, on a lower level in respect to Himself than that on which it had hitherto stood.

I say for a season, because, when we open the Book of Exodus, we find Moses always speaking of the Almighty as the Lord God, as the unchangeable

One, Who was fulfilling the promises which He had made to Abraham in respect of his seed. But Simeon and Levi were then dead.

Again, although Jacob, as the head of the house in which violence dwelt—though that violence was abhorrent to his soul—ceased to speak of the Almighty as the Lord God, we, on the other hand, read that the Lord was with Joseph, and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper. But Joseph, the son of Rachel, was too young at the time to have been with the sons of Jacob when they destroyed Shechem ; and further, when the Lord God is spoken of as watching over him, he had been, by another act of violence, thrust out from his father's house. The Almighty also, as we shall presently see, continued in a very marked manner to be the Lord God of Judah, through whom was to pass the sacred line which ended after the lapse of ages in the Redeemer of Israel.

The discipline was severe, but to effect its enlightening purpose it had to be so. Nevertheless we may feel sad, when we read immediately after that deed of violence had been committed (chap. xxxv.) that God not the Lord, said unto Jacob, " Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there : and make there an altar unto God." Again, " God " said unto Jacob, " Thy name is Jacob : thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name : and He called his name Israel. And God said unto him, I am Almighty God ; " and then He renewed the Promise which He

had made to Abraham, and to Isaac, and to Jacob at Bethel, in all its terms, except in respect of the spiritual blessing. He did not add that in his seed should all the nations of the earth be blessed. I consider that it was in loving-kindness that Jacob's name is here for the second time changed to Israel, and the great Promise again renewed, lest Jacob might fear, because God was no longer "the Lord God" to him, he might have forfeited the inheritance. The spiritual Promise could not be renewed, because the security for its fulfilment was to be found in the unchangeableness of the Lord God, and the Almighty was not now speaking to him under that style.

I have said God was *no longer* the Lord God, for it was the same to the end; as, when Joseph sent wagons to fetch his father into Egypt, God, we read—not the Lord God—appeared to Jacob, and said unto him, "Fear not to go down into Egypt, for I will make of thee a great nation; I will go down with thee into Egypt." Jacob accordingly went down with all his family, including the sons of violence, and there the head of the family of Shem found rest, being ministered to by the children of Ham. And there he died.

We must now turn to Joseph, and make our study of the discipline with which, in the language of the Psalmist, "the Word of the Lord tried him." The Lord suffered Joseph to be sold for a bondservant, and to be so evil intreated that the iron entered into his soul, whilst his feet were hurt in the stocks; and

we cannot doubt that he was, by that discipline, purified, strengthened, enlarged ; nevertheless, Joseph was not chosen of the Lord to be a link in the sacred chain, but Judah was preferred before him. Why was this ?

Of Moses it is recorded that on one occasion he lost patience, and on that account was not allowed to enter the Promised Land. But there is nothing told us of Joseph from which we can gather that he at any time in any way failed either in chastity or probity, the two virtues by which history tells us he was specially characterized. On the contrary, the splendour of his probity appears only to have increased as years rolled by, for from Pharaoh on the throne to the poorest of the fellaheen, unbounded confidence to the last would seem to have been reposed in him—no one voice was raised against him.

Why, then, is all this excellence so fully set before us, if at the end he was not chosen ? Let us turn to his early history. In that we find that, when only a lad, he had two dreams, in which he saw himself exalted above all his brethren. Those dreams pleased him, and he repeated them to the family, and by so doing roused indignation against himself, until his father was stirred to rebuke him. This desire to be first in rank and power—which his father had moreover fostered in Joseph, by his own preference of him to his brothers—was the immediate cause, under God, of all his sufferings. But whilst the external discipline with which God had begun to train his chosen people

could both prune and develop the natural character, could it convert it, *e.g.* replace ambition by humility? Does not Joseph's history probably tell us that for such conversion man had to wait until the discipline became also internal, and the soul was enabled to empty itself out before God in repentance; for in Joseph's case we are—may I use the word?—pointedly told that when his brethren appeared before him in Egypt, *he remembered the dreams*, and at once seized the opportunity to assume hard lordship over them, saying, "Ye are spies;" putting Simeon into prison, and dismissing the others with threats, unmindful of the dire distress which his action would occasion his aged and unhappy father. How great was that distress we learn from his saying to Benjamin when he parted with him, "If I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved." But the desire of power could not be an element in the character of one through whom the sacred line should pass, in which was to be nurtured meekness and lowliness of heart. Therefore, though dearly beloved of the Lord God, Who made all he did to prosper, Joseph, nevertheless, was not chosen.

Only on one occasion, after passing through Judah, is the sacred line shown to us. It was kept hidden from Satan and the world in the tribe of Judah, without its being known in which particular family of the tribe it ran. But when the time came that royalty was to be added to it, and the people of God were to be taught to expect in their deliverer, Who would redeem them, their King, Who would reign over

them, then for a short while the chain became visible in David, but was at once lost sight of again in his family.

And David was, above most men, meek and lowly in heart. His meek submission to Saul, who persecuted him ; his patient endurance of the overbearing behaviour of his relations, of Joab in particular ; his uniform refusal to revenge an injury done to himself, bear witness to his laudable humility, so exemplary that our Lord consented to be called his Son for ever and ever.

But whilst we thus see why it was that Jacob and David were chosen and Joseph not, and learn therefrom that the election was one of character, or perhaps we should say, of special attributes of character, which in this way are shown to be most precious in the sight of God, we must yet remember that Joseph was greatly beloved by the Almighty.

God made two Promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—one temporal, the other spiritual ; and Joseph, by the blessing of Jacob, *was made heir in a very special degree to the temporal promise*, though he did not attain to having it said of him, "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Jacob gave Joseph two portions in the land of Canaan, and then in prophetic spirit said of him, "Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over a wall. . . . The Almighty shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the

womb : the blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills : they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of him that was separate from his brethren."

The disciplinary training of the soul by God compels us to be silent in judging others, and to walk before Him in fear, and yet with very trustful hope in His compassion and in His love.

There remains for me now only to speak of Judah. The life and character of Judah are not drawn for us in the same fulness as in the cases of Jacob and Joseph ; we must therefore conclude it was not required. The great act of Judah in offering to be reduced to slavery, and so sacrificing himself that his brethren might return to their father and abide with him in wealth and abundance, tells us at once why he was chosen to be the progenitor of Him Who offered Himself a sacrifice on the Cross that man might be released from the bondage of sin and death, and return to their heavenly Father, and dwell for ever with Him in Glory. It tells us why our Lord is pleased to be known in heaven as the Lion of the tribe of Judah. The lion is the emblem of strength, and Judah had great strength of character, and prevailed. The sight of Judah's self-sacrifice effected an atonement between Joseph and his brethren ; Joseph looked upon it, and was reconciled ; we are told he could no longer refrain himself, but hastened to make himself known to his brethren.

Remember it was no impulsive act of Judah ; it was premeditated, and deliberately resolved upon. He said to his father, "I will be surety for him (Benjamin) ; of my hand shalt thou require him : if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever." His father yielded his consent, and the Lord chose Judah to be the progenitor of Christ our Saviour.

This grand character, however, lived before the Holy Ghost came to abide within man's soul, before the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ was given ; he was therefore one whom our Lord describes as lying half dead between Jerusalem and Jericho, having been stripped and wounded by thieves. But in this half-dead condition Judah rose up, and with entire unselfishness offered himself to be enslaved for his brethren. It was perhaps to convince us that he was such as our Lord describes—a wounded sinner—that we are told what we read in chap. xxxviii. It is not pleasant reading in itself ; but we notice that the Lord God was with Judah. Whenever the Almighty is spoken of—and He is named three times—it is as the Lord God. We may infer from this that Judah did not take part with his brethren in their cruel slaughter of the sons of Shechem, and that God in consequence remained the Lord God to him ; and throughout this chapter—the thirty-eighth—Judah is portrayed as just and unwilling to wrong others.

His suggestion to his brethren to sell Joseph to the Ishmaelites was probably owing to his seeing that in

no other way could he both save Joseph's life and save his brethren from being guilty of their brother's blood, and slaying him for envy. For years, then, by the discipline of leaving Judah to live with his hard and cruel brethren, the Lord may have been training him to separate himself firmly, but patiently, and without offence from his brethren in their conduct, until his unselfish spirit attained such strength, that he could calmly, and without hesitating in his purpose, offer to surrender his life to deliver those who, though his own brethren according to the flesh, were unlike him in spirit; and yet as his brethren he loved them, and gave himself for them.

Here I conclude my lectures, but cannot close them without giving expression to my deepened conviction that the Book of Genesis is the Word of God, of Him Who is essentially One, and Who has stamped upon it the ineffaceable Image of His own Unity.

THE END



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